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GEARING UP

BJP announces polls in-charge for 3 States

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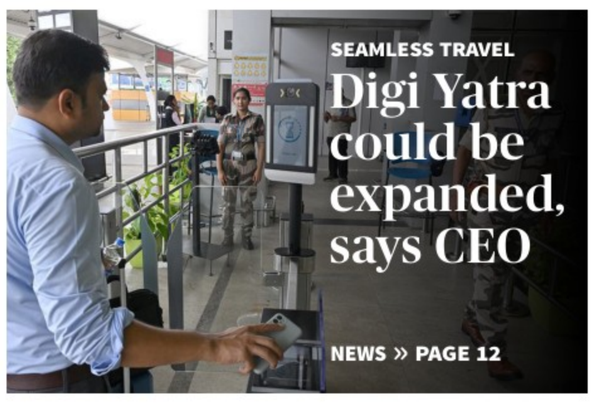

SEAMLESS TRAVEL

Digi Yatra could be expanded, says CEO

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Netanyahu dissolves Israel's War Cabinet

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CONSTITUTIONAL RESPECT

The PM and the spectacle of optics

The need to follow Constitutional morality

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AIFF terminates coach Igor Stimac's contract

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Rahul keeps Rae Bareli; Priyanka for Wayanad

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will make her electoral debut from the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency in Kerala in a byelection, after her brother and former Congress chief, Rahul Gandhi, decided to vacate the seat and retain the Rae Bareli seat in Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Gandhi won both seats in the Lok Sabha election but as rules allow only one to be retained, he had to choose within 14 days of being elected as an MP. The deadline to do so is June 18.

The decision was announced by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his official residence on Monday, after a marathon meeting that went on for over two hours.

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Nine killed in rail accident in Bengal

- Goods train rams Kanchanjunga Express in Darjeeling district
- Accident took place 10 km from the New Jalpaiguri station at 8.55 a.m.
- Rescue personnel struggle for hours to extricate the dead and the injured

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Nine persons, two of them railway crew members, were killed on Monday when a goods train collided with train no. 13174 Agartala-Sealdah Kanchanjunga Express between the Rangapani and Chattar Hat stations in Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Nine persons were grievously injured and 32 sustained minor injuries.

The accident took place about 10 km from the New Jalpaiguri station, in the Katihar division of Northeast Frontier Railway, at 8.55 a.m.

The goods train hit a stationary Kanchanjunga Express from behind on the same track at speed, officials said. Four coaches at the rear of the express train and five wagons of the goods train derailed. A few coaches of the express train, including the guard's cabin and two parcel vans, climbed onto the coaches of the goods train. The coaches were mangled and the rescue team had to struggle for hours to extricate the trapped passengers.

Railway Board Chairperson Jaya Varma Sinha earlier said the collision might have happened as the goods train driver disregarded the signal. Later, the Railway Board said though the loco pilot of the goods train was given authorisation to cross all signals in red between the two stations as the automatic signalling system was "defective", the train's speed was above the limit prescribed for such an eventuality.

Ms. Sinha said the loco pilot of the goods train and the guard of Kanchanjunga Express were killed.

The unaffected coaches of the express train left for Sealdah around 40 minutes past noon. The train had left Agartala in Tripura at 8.15 a.m. on Sunday and was expected in Sealdah at 7.20 p.m. on Monday.

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Off the rails: The site of the train accident in Darjeeling district of West Bengal on Monday. AFP

Loco pilot had permit to cross all signals in red

CHENNAI
The loco pilot of the goods train that rammed the Kanchanjunga Express on Monday had the authority to cross all signals in danger, according to documents made available to *The Hindu*. They revealed that the stationmaster of the Rangapani railway station had authorised the loco pilot to cross all automatic signals between the Rangapani and Chattar Hat stations. » PAGE 11

NEARBY

BSY appears before CID

BENGALURU
Former Chief Minister and BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa, who is accused in a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) case, appeared before the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for investigation on Monday.
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PGCET: Deadline to apply extended

BENGALURU
June 17 was the last date to apply for the PGCET-2024 online application. But, technical glitches in the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) portal, have led to an extension of the deadline. » PAGE 2

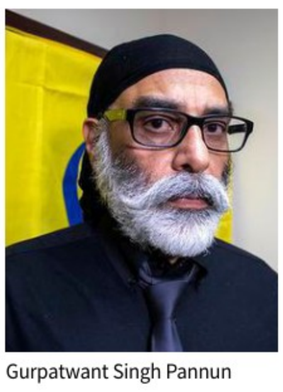
Gupta extradited to U.S., pleads not guilty in Pannun murder plot case

Press Trust of India
NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

Indian national Nikhil Gupta, accused of being involved in a murder-for-hire plot against a Sikh extremist on American soil, pleaded not guilty in the case at a federal court here on Monday.

Mr. Gupta, 52, was extradited to the U.S. from the Czech Republic on Friday.

He was arrested in the Czech Republic last year at the request of the U.S. government on charges of being involved in a plot to assassinate Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in New York.



Gurpatwant Singh Pannun

The Czech Constitutional Court last month rejected a petition by Mr. Gupta against his extradition to the U.S. to face the charges.

U.S. federal prosecutors allege that Mr. Gupta had been working on the directions of an unnamed Indian government official. India has, however, denied its involvement in such a case and has instituted a high-level investigation into the allegations.

"This is a complex matter for both our countries," Mr. Gupta's attorney Jeffrey Chabrowe said ahead of his client's arraignment.

"It is extremely important that we refrain from rushing to conclusions so early in the process. Background and details will develop that may cast government allegations into an entirely new light," Mr. Chabrowe said.

"We will pursue his defence vigorously and ensure he receives full due process, regardless of outside pressures," he added.

Doval, Sullivan attend iCET meeting in Delhi

NEW DELHI
National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and his U.S. counterpart Jake Sullivan had an iCET meet here on Monday, but neither side confirmed if the Pannun case was discussed. » PAGE 10

Id prayers

Muslims offering prayers on the occasion of Id-ul-Azha at Idgah Maidan, Chamarajpet, in Bengaluru on Monday. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

Seven of the accused did not know Darshan before arrest

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Of the 17 accused arrested in connection with the murder of Renukaswamy, a fan of actor Darshan, seven had not known the actor before their arrest and met him for the first time after the crime, some in Mysuru while planning a cover up and others at Annapoorneshwari Nagar Police Station where all the accused are housed, said sources.

Meanwhile, actor Chikkanna was questioned on Monday. Before Renukaswamy was brought to the shed on June 8, Darshan had been at Stonny Brook pub in R.R. Nagar. Chikkanna was reportedly there too.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 2

Shah chairs meet to 'bridge ethnic divide' in Manipur

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high-level meeting on Monday, in the absence of Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, to review the "current status" of the ethnic conflict in the State and the "way forward".

Underscoring the importance of a coordinated approach to resolve the conflict, Mr. Shah said the Home Ministry would talk to both the groups, Meiteis and Kuki-Zo, "to bridge the ethnic divide at the earliest".

A government source told *The Hindu* that Mr. Singh was not invited to the meeting as it was restricted to "security officials". A Manipur government source, explaining Mr. Singh's absence, said that since May 30, 2023, Kuldiep Singh, Security Adviser of the Manipur government, had been designated as the Chairperson of the Unified Command responsible for security-related decisions in the State.

Mr. Shah said the Union government had been actively supporting the State government in strengthening the security situation.

The meeting comes in the wake of fresh violence in Jiribam district that had remained unaffected by ethnic strife so far.

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'TREATED AS FIEFDOM'
» PAGE 10

Union Home Minister Amit Shah chairs a meeting to review the security situation in Manipur, in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

Consultations on providing menstrual leave in State under way

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

Amidst a national debate over making provision for menstrual leave, the Karnataka government has started consultation to provide one-day paid menstrual leave for those working in factories, information technology, garment sectors, and multi-national companies where several lakh women are employed.

In what is being seen as a progressive move that could lead to gender sensitive labour policy by many women activists, the consultation on the menstrual leave comes after former Union Minister Smriti Irani opposed the leave on the floor of the Rajya Sabha in December 2023, stating that it could lead to discrimination against women employees, which drew angry responses.

The Labour Department has set up an 18-member committee headed by Prof. Sapna Mohan, Head of the Department, School of Law in Christ University, to deliberate on and submit a report on the feasibility of making provision for menstrual leave in Karnataka. The committee comprises legal and medical experts, psychologist, representatives from industries and trade unions, besides Labour Department officials.

While one round of discussion has taken place already, the committee is set to meet this week again before presenting a report to the Labour Department. "Let the committee file its report. The government will consider it since there are pros and cons and financial implications," Labour Minister Santhosh Lad, who set up the committee in January 2024, told *The Hindu*.

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In other places

- **Soviet Russia:** Paid menstrual leave introduced in 1920s and revoked in 1927
- **Japan:** Paid leave on request introduced in 1947
- **Indonesia:** Paid leave on request for two days per month or additional payment for work on two days of menstrual cycle since 1948. Amended in 2003 making it subject to negotiation between employer and employees
- **Taiwan:** Paid leave of three days per month on request since 2003
- **South Korea:** Paid leave on request of one day per month since 1953
- **Zambia:** Paid leave of one day per month
- **Spain:** Three to five days of leave with doctor's note
- **Bihar:** Biological leave of two days per month for all women government employees, including contract workers since 1992
- **Kerala:** Menstrual leave for female students in universities under Department of Higher Education since 2023

Source: All-India Trade Union Congress

A brilliant change of pace: how India went from twisting and turning to giving it unforgivingly straight

Not until Kapil made telling statements with his debut in Pakistan in the late '70s did a growing tribe of young aspirants harbour ambitions of running in hard, attacking the bowling crease and giving the batters a serious work-over

R. Kaushik

During his celebrated Test career, Sunil Gavaskar opened the batting in all but nine of his 214 innings. Less acknowledged is the fact that the Little Master also took the new ball in five innings.

That wasn't so much because he was a fearsome, pacy little pocket dynamite – what an alluring prospect that! – as the fact that India needed someone to run in and bowl maybe an over or two before bringing their wonderful spinners into the picture.

How things have since changed! A searing revolution, that like most revolutions do, has gathered steam and come to such a pass that India now boasts a glittering array of pace-bowling riches spearheaded by the Kohinoor of fast bowling, Jasprit Bumrah, inarguably the best all-format quick bowler in the world right now.

Crown jewels: Bumrah and Shami have been the torchbearers of India's latest generation of pacers. K.R. DEEPAK & GETTY IMAGES

The beginning

India's pace stocks had began to rise much before Bumrah's international debut in January 2016. Mohammad Nissar and Amar Singh have been romanticised in Indian cricket history, and rightly so, even if there are no great visuals to provide a glimpse of just how good they were.

Their wonderful exploits in India's inaugural Test, against England at Lord's in June 1932, are well documented – Nissar finished with six wickets for the game and Amar four in India's 158-run defeat.

But over the years, a combination of the pitches in India, the mindsets of those that masterminded India's progress and the sustained emergence of a succession of high-class spin bowlers which culminated in the coming together of the great spin quartet in the 1960s took the sheen off fast bowling.

India held its own at home, as expected, but didn't have the resources to fight fire with fire overseas. Its spinners made an impact even in unfriendly conditions but for India to succeed regularly away from home, it had to assemble a crack fast-bowling outfit. It took the Men in Blue a while doing so, but look at where they are now.

Not until Kapil Dev made telling statements with his debut in Pakistan in the late 1970s did a growing tribe of young aspirants harbour ambitions of running in hard, attacking the bowling crease and giving the batters a serious working over. It didn't take Kapil long to understand that, because he was at once the shock and the stock bowler, he had to recalibrate his bowling and sacrifice a little bit of pace at the altar of longevity. That Kapil's sensational arrival coincided with the decline of the spin foursome meant the focus returned to fast bowling for the first time in the televised era.

Kapil catalysed a generation of young kids to take up fast bowling and before long, one of those who was inspired by the great all-rounder was bowling alongside him at the highest level. In modern-day Indian cricket, Javagal Srinath was the first true fast bowler in the real sense, his tall, lithe, wiry frame and a whippy action enabled him to hurry and harry and hustle batters, especially because he was blessed with the ability to bring the ball into the right-handers and get considerable bounce courtesy a high release point.

Fragmented fortunes

Pacers, however, came only in dribs and drabs. There would be one, maybe two at the most, who could top the 140 kmph mark repeatedly; there was no paucity of skill with the ball, but raw pace was another matter altogether. Until came along Mohammed Shami in 2013, and Bumrah two and a half years later. Oh, and Virat Kohli as skipper somewhere in between.

The disparity in India's results in Test cricket between home and away was a major talking point in cricketing circles. In its own backyard, India was practically invincible.

Brought up on a diet of high-quality spin bowling, India's batters mastered spinners of all kinds when playing at home, while its own magnificent tweakers teased and tormented and lured overseas batters to their doom with ridiculous ease.

There was a tendency to gloss over repeated losses outside the sub-continent, in England where swing was pronounced, in New Zealand where the lush tracks encouraged generous lateral movement, in Australia where the hard decks translated to pace and bounce.

> Most great fast bowlers build up momentum in their run-up, but Wasim *bhai* and Bumrah rely more on their upper bodies and do everything with their bowling arm, their wrist. That's why they are able to succeed on even docile tracks; they take the pitch out of the equation
>
> **L. BALAJI**

Kohli took it upon himself to set that record straight. It was always on the cards that he would succeed Mahendra Singh Dhoni as the Test captain, but few would have suspected that that would be as early as in January 2015. In the middle of India's tour of Australia, Dhoni announced his retirement from the five-day game after salvaging a draw in the third of four Tests, in Melbourne.

Kohli's first Test as the full-time captain was, ironically enough, on a traditionally spin-friendly deck in the New Year's Test in Sydney, but within a few months, he had read his team the riot act, after a disheartening loss in Galle to Sri Lanka despite taking a potentially decisive first-innings lead.

Health is wealth

Two of Kohli's greatest contributions to Indian cricket, apart from his mountain of runs, are the uncompromising insistence on fitness and the piecing together of a pace attack that alone, he was rightly convinced, could help India win Tests in Australia and England, South Africa and New Zealand.

Between Srinath and Shami, India had numerous fast bowlers – Venkatesh Prasad, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Ajit Agarkar, Irfan Pathan, Lakshmipathi Balaji, Munaf Patel, S. Sreesanth, Ishant Sharma, R.P. Singh, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, among others – but apart from Zaheer and Ishant, and to a certain extent Pathan, the rest fell by the wayside for one reason or the other.

It wasn't until Shami broke through on his debut against West Indies in Kolkata in November 2013 with a sensational burst of reverse swing that the latest revolution kicked off. Bumrah's debut two and a bit years later, in white-ball cricket under Dhoni, convinced Kohli and team director Ravi Shastri that in time, the unconventional speedster from Gujarat would be a huge success in the five-day landscape too. The hunt to unearth a band of fast bowlers was helped along by a BCCI diktat mandating a certain amount of grass on pitches for domestic cricket, and the incessant efforts of Bharat Arun, the long-serving bowling coach of the national team, bore fruit in the assemblage of an attack for the ages.

Today, teams that once didn't think twice about laying out green carpets or bouncy decks when India came calling are caught in a dilemma. India's batters are skilled enough to come through demanding tests, but India's bowlers also possess sufficient quality and are numerically adequate to pay back in kind. In Durban in 1996, for instance, few don't remember that India were bowled out for 100 and 66. Not many might readily recall that South Africa itself made only 235 and 259; Hansie Cronje, the then South African captain, proclaimed that the difference between the teams was that while he could fall back on four outstanding pacers (Allan Donald, Shaun Pollock, Lance Klusener and Brian McMillan), his opposite number Sachin Tendulkar's hands were tied because he had only Srinath and Prasad as his principal weapons.

Too hot to handle

Cut to Cape Town in January 2024 and, even without Shami, India ran hot at Newlands. Mohammed Siraj sent the host packing for 55 on the first morning with six for 15, Bumrah took six for 61 in the second innings and India completed a two-day victory by seven wickets. There's no gainsaying how much more damage could have been inflicted had Shami been available for selection.

The embarrassment of riches has spilled over to white-ball cricket too. At the ongoing T20 World Cup, Bumrah and Siraj are being backed up by Arshdeep Singh, the left-arm swing exponent who has a mean yorker and clever changes of pace, and vice-captain Hardik Pandya with a penchant for testing out the bounce in the surface. Despite his injury travails, Pandya often tops 140; in the travelling reserves until Avesh Khan returned home were he and Khaleel Ahmed. Mayank Yadav forced people to sit up and take notice with his control at 150-plus kmph during the IPL, and across franchises and state sides, there is a noticeable slant towards pace which has coincided with, or even precipitated, the dwindling of quality spin bowlers.

It wasn't until Shami broke through on his debut against West Indies in Kolkata in November 2013 with a sensational burst of reverse swing that the latest revolution kicked off

India has graduated – if that's indeed the right word – from the land of spin to a nation with outstanding fast-bowling talent. Quality has been backed up by depth, not just quantity, and even when Bumrah was out for a year with a stress fracture of the back, India didn't suffer hugely. Of course they missed their spearhead, but they found ways to fill the giant void. In fact, such was their depth that they left Shami out of their World Cup XI until Pandya's ankle injury forced them to rejig their combination. Shami responded by picking up five-fors for fun.

For all of Shami's virtuosity and Siraj's fire, it's Bumrah who is the unquestioned leader. The hyperextension of his right elbow gives him an advantage that he has made the most of. As Balaji said the other day, he is a great example, like Wasim Akram, of using sport to bowl fast, not athleticism.

"Most great fast bowlers build up momentum in their run-up, but Wasim *bhai* and Bumrah rely more on their upper bodies and do everything with their bowling arm, their wrist. That's why they are able to succeed on even docile tracks; they take the pitch out of the equation."

There is a reason why India is No. 1 in the world in both limited-overs versions and No. 2 in Test cricket. It's not hard to see what that is.

THE GIST

- India held its own at home, as expected, but didn't have the resources to fight fire with fire overseas. Its spinners made an impact even in unfriendly conditions but for India to succeed regularly away from home, it had to assemble a crack fast-bowling outfit
- Between Srinath and Shami, India had numerous fast bowlers — Prasad, Zaheer, Nehra, Agarkar, Irfan, Balaji, Munaf, Sreesanth, Ishant, R.P. Singh, and Bhuvneshwar among others
- Today, teams that once didn't think twice about laying out green carpets or bouncy decks when India came calling are caught in a dilemma. India's batters are skilled enough to come through demanding tests, but India's bowlers also possess sufficient quality and are numerically adequate to pay back in kind

Seven of the total 17 arrested had not known Darshan before

Sources say these people were roped into the plot by associates of the actor

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru police probing the murder of Renukaswamy, a fan who was allegedly tortured and killed by a gang including actor Darshan, have now arrested a total of 17 persons, including one Dhanraj alias Raju, from Chitradurga on Monday.

Seven of the accused, including Dhanraj, had not known the actor before their arrest and met him for the first time after the crime. Some met him in Mysuru while planning a cover-up, and others at Annapoorneshwari Nagar Police Station, where all the accused are housed.

The cab driver Ravi, who drove the vehicle in which Raghavendra, president of Darshan Fans' Club in Chitradurga, brought Renukaswamy to Bengaluru along with his three associates – Anu Kumar, Jagadeesh, and Dhanraj – also did not know the actor before. They met the actor briefly at the police station.

Keshavmurthy, Karthik, and Nikhil, who surrendered before the Kamakshipalya Police Station owing to the crime on June 10, also did not know the actor before the crime. However, they met him at a private hotel in Mysuru a day before they surrendered where they were reportedly paid money. These people were roped into the plot by the associates of the actor, sources said.

A police party deployed a team of civic officials and tried to dredge up the SWD in Kamakshipalya in search of the deceased's mobile phone

Meanwhile, a police party deployed a team of civic officials and tried to dredge up the stormwater drain (SWD) in Kamakshipalya, where the accused threw the body of the victim, in search of the deceased's mobile phone.

The accused reportedly told the police that they threw the mobile phone in the drain before disposing of the body. The mobile phone would make a crucial piece of evidence.

More such crimes?

The city police are reportedly probing as to whether more such crimes were committed at the Pattanegere shed, a 5-acre plot where vehicles whose owners have defaulted on loans were seized and parked.

"There are reports that loan defaulters were often brought to the shed, held against their will, and beaten up. There are also rumours that actor Darshan had also brought other people here, held them, and beat them up. The ease with which the gang chose this place to bring Renukaswamy suggests they may have done this before. Investigations are underway," a senior police official said.

Chikkanna questioned

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Actor Chikkanna

Comedy actor Chikkanna, who was served notice by the police in connection with the Renukaswamy murder case, was questioned on Monday.

Before Renukaswamy was brought to the shed in Pattanagere on the evening of June 8, Saturday, Darshan had been partying with his associates at the Stonny Brook pub in R.R. Nagar. Actor Chikkanna was also reportedly present in the afternoon party, but later left the place, following which Darshan and his associates came to the shed, police sources said. Chikkanna has denied knowledge of the crime. He will now be made a witness in the case, sources said. Chikkanna was present with the police when they conducted spot mahazar at the pub with actor Darshan, owner Vinay and other accused who were present at the Saturday afternoon party, on Monday.

Passenger finds metal blade in in-flight meal

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

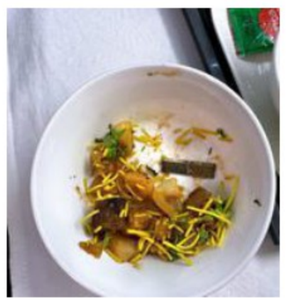
A passenger onboard an Air India flight from Bengaluru to San Francisco recently had an unpleasant experience while having the in-flight meal as he found a metal blade in a bowl of chaat that was served to him.

Mathures Paul, a journalist who was onboard AI 175 from Bengaluru to San Francisco on June 9, shared this Bangalore to San Francisco experience with *The Hindu* on Monday.

"I took the 1.50 p.m. Air India flight (AI 175) on June 9 from Bengaluru to San Francisco (seat number 7C). The first half of the flight was thankfully uneventful. For lunch (main course), I was served quite a few items on the tray, and I decided to begin with the fig chaat, which I was having while watching the film Priscilla (onboard entertainment). A few spoonfuls into the chaat, I felt something hard/metallic inside the mouth, and after chewing for two-three seconds, I spat it out into the bowl to find a blade," said Mr. Paul.

He added that he immediately complained to the stewardess about finding the metal blade.

"Obviously, I complained to the stewardess who spoke for four-five seconds. The conversation went something like: Sorry about this and we will inform the catering team. She returned with a bowl of chickpea salad," he added.


Chaat bowl in which the passenger onboard Air India Bengaluru-San Francisco flight found a blade. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Upon landing in San Francisco, Mr. Paul said that he posted on X (formerly Twitter) about the incident. However, he said that there was no response from Air India (except from the Air India bot on X).

He said that two or three days later, somebody from the airline's customer service/social media team called to say the matter would be looked into.

"On June 15 at 8.30 p.m., I received an email from Air India Care, and it reads: "We value our relationship and would request you to accept our goodwill offer of a one-way business class ticket across any Al flight, redeemable within one year of issuance. We look forward to your response and would request you to look at this incident in isolation, allowing us to serve you to a better experience the next time you travel with us," he said.

To this mail, Mr. Paul said that he replied the following: "This is a bribe and it doesn't address the issue. I don't accept such freebies and I will not accept the ticket."

Air India confirmed that a foreign object was found in the meal of Mr. Paul.

"Air India confirms that a foreign object was found in a guest's meal aboard one of our flights. After investigation, it has been identified as coming from the vegetable processing machine used at the facilities of our catering partner. We have worked with our catering partner to strengthen measures to prevent any recurrence, including more frequent checking of the processor, especially after chopping any hard vegetable. Air India has engaged with the affected customer and deeply apologises for this experience," said Rajesh Dogra, Chief Customer Experience Officer, Air India.

A spokesperson of TajSATS, the company that supplied the food, said, "We apologise for the unfortunate incident. We are committed to the highest standards of food safety and have strengthened our processes of comprehensive inspection and preventive maintenance of all our production equipment."

Power shutdown

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

There will be a disruption in the power supply on Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the areas serviced from 66/11 kV KHB MUSS for carrying out maintenance work. According to BESCOM, C,O and M Division, Hebbal, the affected areas are: Shivanahally, Srinidhi Layout, Ramagondanahally, 5th Phase, Yelahanka New Town, and surrounding areas.

Full-time MD for K-RIDE will be appointed in 15 to 20 days, says Somanna

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

On Monday, Minister of State for Railways V. Somanna said that the Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Development Company (K-RIDE), responsible for executing the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP), will get a technically qualified full-time managing director within the next 15 to 20 days.

"South Western Railways (SWR) has formally requested the Railway Board to appoint a technically qualified full-time managing director for K-RIDE. The request has been approved by the railway board, and the appointment process is currently in progress to finalise it within the next 15 to 20 days," he said.

Meanwhile, on June 15, K-RIDE issued a tender for the construction of eight stations along the Mallige Line's Chikkabanavara-Yeswantpur priority section. The stations covered in the tender include Benniganahalli, Kasturi Nagar, Seva Nagar, Banaswadi, Nagawara, Kanaka Nagar, Hebbal, and Mathikere.

These stations are part of Bengaluru Suburban Rail's 25-km Byappanahalli-Yeshwantpur-Chikkabanavara (Mallige) corridor.

Darshan's fan found dead

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A fan of actor Darshan, now arrested in the Renukaswamy murder case, was found dead in a stormwater drain in Malenadoddi village, Channapatna taluk on Monday.

The deceased, identified as Bhairesh, in his late thirties, was a resident of the village. Police have suspected that he may have ended his life falling into the drain. Bhairesh was reportedly dejected over the situation his matinee idol Darshan finds himself in over the last few days. However, police said what led the deceased to take his life was under investigation.

(If you are in distress, or have suicidal tendencies for help call Arogya Sahayavani on 104)

Son kills man for harassing mother

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A son assaulted and killed a man who was allegedly harassing his mother at an under-construction building near Kudlu Gate, Parappana Agrahara on Sunday night. The deceased has been identified as Krishnoji Rao, 37.

Rajeshwari and Krishnoji Rao were living together with Rajeshwari's son Shivakumar from her first marriage. The couple were not married. They were living in a shed at an under-construction building working as a watchman and construction labour at the site.

According to the police, of late, Krishnoji Rao used to allegedly come home drunk, harass and beat up Rajeshwari. On Sunday night too, he turned up drunk and was beating up Rajeshwari when her son Shivakumar, in his 20s, intervened and allegedly hit him on his head with a wooden plank. As he fell down, the mother-son duo allegedly beat him to death and fled from the scene. Parappana Agrahara Police have registered a case and are searching for the mother-son duo.

Candidates struggle to apply for PGCET due to technical glitches, KEA extends deadline

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

June 17 was the last date to apply for the PGCET-2024 online application for the entrance to post-graduate engineering and other courses. But, candidates were struggling to apply due to technical glitches in the online application portal of the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA), promoting an extension of the deadline.

PGCET is the gateway to M.E., M.Tech, M.Arch (Architecture), MBA and MCA courses. On May 27, KEA had invited online applications. June 17 was the last date for applying.

Till June 17, 34,212 online applications – 21,026 for MBA courses, 9,961 for MCA and 4,344 applications for ME/M.Tech/M.Arch courses – had been received.

However, for the last three days, the KEA online application portal has been dogged by technical problems, and candidates are struggling to apply.

Trilok, a student, said, "June 17 is the last date to apply for the PGCET exam. I have been trying to submit the application for the past three days, but have not been able to. I have also been unable to upload documents, including Revenue Documents (RD) number. Calling the KEA helpline is of no use, as Sunday and Monday were government holidays."

Pramod G.S., another candidate, said, "Unable to fill PGCET online application completely. Portal hangs again and again. Because of this, we are worried that we will miss the exam this time. The application submission date should be extended."

H. Prasanna, Executive Director, KEA told *The Hindu* that there has been a problem with PGCET-2024 online application submission due to the server of the Revenue Department being down for the last three days.

"Candidates applying for reservation are required to mention the RD number of caste and income certificate. The RD numbers are verified with the Revenue Department's backend data. However, the Revenue Department's server has been down for the last three days. Hence, it has been decided to extend the online application deadline to June 20 while the last date for fee payment is June 21," he said.

No exam centre in Mangaluru

In addition, candidates were irked that there is no PGCET examination centre in Dakshina Kannada district this year.

"Mangaluru is be a major examination centre for State and national-level entrance exams. However, no examination centre has been assigned in Dakshina Kannada district this year for PGCET. Inevitably, Udupi district had to be chosen," said Bibitha Salian, a candidate from Mangaluru. Responding to this complaint, Mr. Prasanna said, "Since the number of students registering for the PGCET is less, it is not possible to conduct the examination in all the districts of the state. The exam will be conducted only in select districts. "

PUBLIC NOTICE

Publics are hereby informed that my client **SRI. ATTHUR SIVA PRASAD** and others, are intending to purchase a property detailed in the schedule below (hereinafter referred as "Schedule properties) from its present owner SRI . C. PRASAD, S/o Sri C K Muniswamy Reddy, R/at, C3-252, BDA INDP Flats, 3rd Main, Domlur 2nd Stage, Bangalore – 560071 on the basis of the representation made by the owner that he is the absolute owner of schedule properties, with unrestricted rights of alienation over the same.

Notice is hereby given to the general public that any person asserting any right, title, claim, tenancy, mortgage, charge, lien or other interest whatsoever in respect of the schedule property or parcel/s forming part of the same, or having any objection/s of any manner whatsoever to the above proposed transaction, are hereby called upon to submit their objections in writing together with documentary proof of such claim, so as to reach us at the address given below within **15 (fifteen) days** from the date of publication of notice. If no such objections are received, it would be deemed that owner, of schedule properties have a clear and marketable title to the schedule properties and that none else have any right, title or interest whatsoever in respect of the schedule properties or any parcel forming part of the same and my clients would be at liberty to proceed to enter into and complete the transaction of sale in respect of the schedule properties.

SCHEDULE "A" PROPERTY

All that part and parcel of the Dry land bearing Sy. No. 34/2 measuring 1 acre 14 guntas along with Kharab measuring 0-5 guntas situated at S. Vaddahalli Village, Nandagudi Hobli, Bengaluru rural district, Hoskote Taluk, bounded on: **East by:** Remaining portion of Sy No: 34/3 belonging to C. Prasad, **West by:** Road, **North by:** Property bearing Sy No.31/1A belonging to C Prasad, **South by:** Road and Giddenahalli Boundary

SCHEDULE "B" PROPERTY

All that part and parcel of the agricultural land bearing Old Sy.No.34/1, New Sy No 34/3 measuring 1 acre 35 gutnas and karab land of 0-04.08 Guntas situated at S. Vaddahalli Village, Nandagudi Hobli, Hosakote Taluk Bangalore Rural District bounded on: **East by:** Land bearing Sy No: 34/1 belonging to Nagesh, **West by:** Land bearing Sy No.34/2 belonging to C Prasad, **North by:** Land bearing Sy No.31/1B, **South by:** Village boundary of Giddanahalli.

SCHEDULE "C" PROPERTY

All that part and parcel of the land bearing Sy no.31/1A, measuring 1 acre 22 guntas situated at S.Vaddahalli Village, Nandagudi Hobli, Hoskote Taluk Bnagalore Rural District bounded on: **East by:** Land bearing Sy No. 31/1B, **West by:** Land Belonging to Chinnappa Chari, Nagraj and Sridhar, **North by:** Land Belonging to Yerappa, **South by:** land bearing Sy No.34/2 belonging to C Prasad

V.N. KUMAR, Advocate
No.1, "Green Field", Immadihally, White Field, Bangalore-66. Mob.No.9845462353

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client is intending to purchase - All that part and parcel of Residential Apartment No. 001, Ground Floor at Bhavani Elite apartment having Super Built up area of 1580 Sq Ft together with 346 Sq Ft of Undivided share, right, title and interest in Site No. 3 (1800/3) assigned with PID No. 34-57-3 measuring East to West: 93 Ft; North to South: 50 Ft in all measuring 4650 Sq Ft situated at BDA Layout, 10th Cross, Hampinagar, RPC Layout, BBMP Hampinagar Ward No. 133. having present Khata No. 1800/001.

From **Smt. J Chandrika** W/o Late Sreenivasa K and her daughters **Meena S** and **Bhavana S** who are the sole legal heirs. title deed holders and in possession of the above property and the said title deed holders and joint owners have represented that they are absolute owner for the above described property and other than himself there is / are no other person/s or legal entity who has got any right, title, interest, possession or charge over above property. The above property was purchased vide Registered Sale Deed dated 18-07-2014 registered as document no. SRI-1-02264/2014-15, Stored in CD No SRID 168 from **M/s Vaishnavi Promoters** represented by its partners K S Chandrashekar and A M Meenakshi in favour of Sri K. Sreenivasa. Any person/s or legal entity/s having any claims, right, title, interest, or any objection/s and or opposing sale transaction in whatsoever manner may lodge his/her/their objections with relevant documentary proof to the undersigned **within 15 (FIFTEEN DAYS)** from the date of publication of this notice. failing which it will be presumed that no other person/s has got any claim, right, title, interest or charge over the above said property and our client will proceed to complete transaction.

S.N. Swamy & Associates
S. NANJUNDA SWAMY, Advocate
No. 69, Opp. Jain temple, 3rd Main, Chamarajpet, Bangalore-18.
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PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

KRITHI KISHORE Iyengar of Cluny Convent showcased remarkable skills and determination, securing 1st place in Kata event under 9–10 years Girls category in the Goju Warriors Cup 2024 Open National Karate Championship on June 16th, 2024 held in Mysore.

EDUCATIONAL

GENERAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that our client M/s.Sameera Estates Private Limited having its registered office at 91 and 92, Kodambakkam High Road, Nungambakam, Chennai – 600 034 have entered into a registered "Agreement To Sell" (ATS) with M/s.Sahara Prime City Limited and its subsidiary companies, for purchase of the properties mentioned in the Schedule hereinunder, to an extent of 69.99 Acres, situated in Brammapuram and Kangeyanallure Village, Katpadi Taluk, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu, by Document No. 4293/2017 dated 22.08.2017, registered in the office of the Sub Registrar Katapadi, Tamil Nadu ("The Said Property"). our client has duly deposited/paid a considerable amount of money (Sale Consideration) in the account of "SEBI-SAHARA REFUND ACCOUNT NO. 012210110003740" in accordance with the prevailing orders/directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. In view of the said registered Agreement To Sale, our client is bonafide and lawful purchaser of the Said Property with proven records.

During the subsistence of the ATS the subject property of the ATS was conveyed to M/s. R. K. Dhayu Real Estates LLP and M/s. R. K. Nivi Dhaya Real Estates LLP having their registered office at 69, Karumaram, Palayam, Uthukuli Main Road Tirupar, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu - 641607, by M/s.Sahara Prime City Limited and its subsidiary companies registered through Sale deeds dated 10/01/2023 registered as Document Nos. 231, 232, 233, 234 and 235 of 2023 in the office of the Sub Registrar, Katpadi, Tamil Nadu.

Consequently our client was constrained to file Interlocutory Application No. 40383/2023 in Contempt Petition No. 412 of 2012 filed by M/s.Sameera Estates Private Limited seeking a direction to declare the sale deeds registered in favour of M/s. R. K. Dhayu Real Estates LLP and M/s. R. K. Nivi Dhaya Real Estates LLP as null, void and illegal, not to release the original documents to M/s. R. K. Dhayu Real Estates LLP and M/s. R. K. Nivi Dhaya Real Estates LLP. The above mentioned Interlocutory applications are pending for adjudication before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. Our client has also filed written complaint about the said illegal sale transactions to the Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the custodian of title documents pertaining to the said property and the authority incharge of the properties of Sahara.

It has come to the notice of our client that when the matter is pending before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the said companies M/s. R. K. Dhayu Real Estates LLP and M/s. R. K. Nivi Dhaya Real Estates LLP, are trying to enter into Joint Development Agreement/Sale Agreement/Sale Deed with interested third parties.

In the circumstances the Public are hereby cautioned not to deal with M/s. R. K. Dhayu Real Estates LLP and M/s. R. K. Nivi Dhaya Real Estates LLP with respect to the schedule mentioned property which is covered by the registered Agreement To Sell entered by our client, failing which those who deal with the schedule mentioned property shall do so at their sole risk and be liable for all the consequences and costs thereof. Take further notice, that failure to do so will invite criminal prosecution and civil proceedings and will make the transaction illegal, null, void and bad-in-law.

SCHEDULE

All the piece and parcel of land total admeasuring to an extent of 69.99 acres, consisting of various extents and survey numbers situated in Brammapuram and Kangeyanallure Village, Katpadi Taluk, Vellore Registration District, in Brammapuram Village Survey Nos. 389/1 & 3, 389/3, 390/3 & 4, 391/1, 399/2A, 399/3, 399/4, 400, 401, 410/1, 2, 4 & 5, 397/1, 402/4A & 4B, 417/2 & 3, 419/1 & 3, 415/1A &1B, 419/2, 414/1 & 3, 412/2, 414/1, 418/1, 2 & 3, 417/2, 413, 420/1A/1B, 414/1 (PART), 435/1A-1I, 415/2 & 4, 425, 420/2, 413, 415/1A, 416/1 & 2, 402/3, 410/3 & 6, 399/2, 435/1A-1I, 2A, 2 B2, 2 D-2H, 3A-3E, 7A & 7B, 414/1 & 1 PART, 413, 420/1A, 415/2, 3 & 4, 425, 420/2, 413, 420/1A & 1B, 410/4, 410/5, 412, 417/2, 418/1, 2 & 3, 412/2, 414/1, 415/1A & 1B, 419/1, 415/1A, 414/3, 416/1 & 2, 415/2, 397/1, 402/4B, 390/4, 402/3, 410/3 & 6, 399/2, 412/1 & 4, 410/7 & 8, 402/2 & 4A, 406/2 -7, 417/1A & 1B1, 417/ 1B2, 1C, 1D1, 1D2, 1E, 1B, 1D, 414/3 and in Kangeyanallure Village in Survey Nos. 64/1 -5, 62, 63/1-3, 53/1A & 2A, 63/1, 2 & 3, 53/1C, 53/2B, 54, 53/2D, 53/2E, 53/2C, 53/1B, 58/2C, 57/2, 60/2, 55, 56, 61/2, 68/1, 67, 66, 53/1A-1C & 2A-2E, 58/2, 57/2A, 60/2A, 60/2C, 68/1, 63/3, 67, 55, 56, 61/2, 64/1 -5 coming within the Sub Registrar Office Katpadi and Registration District of Vellore.

KEN Advocates
II Floor No.148,
Second Line Beach
near DARE House,
Chennai 600 001
Date: 18-06-2024

A 'universal' equation predicts how often bird, bat, insect wings beat

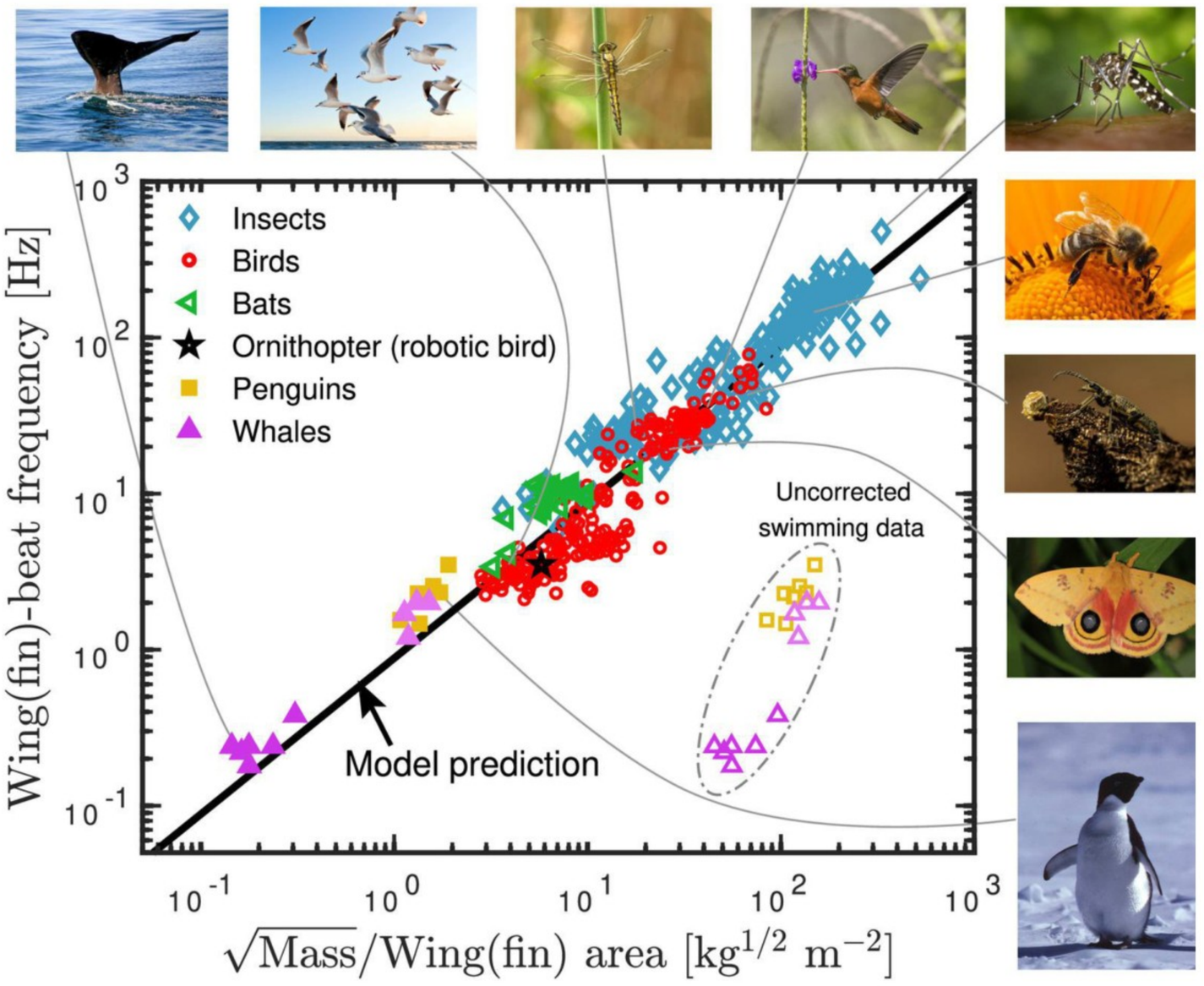
Mathematics is a language to describe the natural universe and the equation depicts what seems to be a universal law telling us why flying birds and insects fly the way they do, what a bird or insect that evolves in the future could look like, and what winged robots need to look like

The Hindu Bureau

Almost all animals that fly through the air and many that swim through water have evolved to flap their wings (or fins) at a frequency given by a simple formula, three scientists at Roskilde University in Denmark have found.

The formula relates the flapping frequency at which a winged entity bats its wings to hover in the air (or stay submerged in the water) to the entity's mass and the size of the wings.

The researchers also found the formula holds for a large variety of life-forms, including insects, birds, bats, penguins, whales, and one robotic bird called an ornithopter – the dragonfly-like aeroplanes in the new *Dune* films.



A plot showing the scaling relationship between *f* and √m/A. PLOS ONE 19(6): E0303834.

What is the formula?

The formula is straightforward: $f \propto \sqrt{m/A}$. *f* here is the flapping frequency, m the mass of the airborne animal, and A the area of the wings (α stands for 'is proportional to').

When the researchers calculated √m/A number of various animals, birds, and insects and plotted it on the x-axis and their respective frequencies on the y-axis, they found a nearly straight line (see below). The black line is the relationship their model based on the formula predicted – an almost perfect fit.

The Roskilde team's results were published in the journal *PLoS One* on June 5.

How did they find the formula?

People have attempted before to find some kind of unifying thread through the wing-beating frequencies of animals, birds, and insects that fly.

In most of these efforts, scientists arrived at correlations between flapping frequency and mass and between wing area and mass based on measuring these numbers in the wild. The results were relationships like $f \propto m^{-0.43}$, which scientists haven't been able to arrive it using only what they know about physics, without using empirical data.

In its paper, the Roskilde team wrote that its members wanted to attempt the former: derive a theoretical equation and then check if it fit what they find in the wild. As they put it: "can one arrive at a reliable prediction for the wing-beat frequency of a flying animal from physics-based arguments alone, i.e. without appealing to empirical correlations?"

They started at the equation of Newton's second law for an animal trying to stay airborne by flapping its wings: $F = ma$. The *a* here is really *g*, the downward acceleration due to gravity, and m is the animal's mass. *F* is the force the animal has to generate by flapping its wings. From here they worked forward to account for the momentum of the air each wing stroke pushes down, the velocity of air flow around the wings, and the density of the atmosphere.

As they did, they encountered a variety of quantities – especially the shapes of the wings and the angles at which they flap – that didn't have units, i.e. they were dimensionless.

They bundled the numbers representing these entities into a single constant called *C*; its precise value depends on empirical observations. Thus, they had their equation: $f = \sqrt{\frac{mg}{C\rho_{air}A^2}}$.

f here is the wingbeat frequency, m the mass of the animal, ρ_{air} the atmosphere's density, and A the size of the wing. Et voila.

PLOS ONE 19(6): E0303834.

What does *C* hold?

Matt Wilkinson, director of studies in natural sciences at the University of Cambridge, flagged that the equation's proportionality constant, *C*, could yield more insights, too.

He told *Physics World* a bird's flight is most efficient when the wings beat at a bird's specific resonant frequency, but if the bird is heavier beyond a point, this frequency won't suffice to hold up its mass, so its flight will be necessarily less than efficient.

Given the equation's variable components, he added, the size dependence should be hidden away in the constant *C*. "Unpicking that, despite the enormous differences in wing shape and flight kinematics, is where the real insights will be found," he told the magazine.

Does the formula apply to fish?

Mathematics is a language to describe the natural universe and the equation depicts what seems to be a universal law telling us why flying birds and insects fly the way they do, what a bird or insect that evolves in the future could look like, and what winged robots need to look like if they expect to become airborne.

> "Can one arrive at a reliable prediction for the wing-beat frequency of a flying animal from physics-based arguments alone, i.e. without appealing to empirical correlations?"

The proportionality relationship arises when these adjustables are taken away, leaving $f \propto m/A$.

"Interestingly," the researchers wrote in their paper, their equation "also gives a recipe for the fin/fluke frequency of swimming animals as positively buoyant diving animals must continuously move water upwards in order to stay submerged. This, of course, holds only for animals with no means of adjusting buoyancy, which excludes fish with a swim bladder.

Calculating fin/fluke frequency from [the equation] requires two modifications, replacing the density of air by the density of water and animal mass by the buoyancy-corrected mass."

Where does the formula apply?

The researchers tested their equation with data about birds, insects, etc. presented in older published studies, where they found "176 different insect data points (including bees, moths, dragonflies, beetles, and mosquitoes), 212 different bird data points (ranging from hummingbirds to swans), and 25 bat data points".

The equation has a regime in which its left-hand side *equals* its right-hand side, which presumes certain physical conditions. For example, you'll remember reading about the Reynolds number (Re) in high school: at a low value of Re, the flow of a fluid will be streamlined; if the value is high, the flow is said to have become turbulent.

The value of Re depends on the fluid's density, speed, viscosity, and a length scale. At high Re, the fluid's density matters more than its viscosity for an animal trying to 'fly' through it – and this is the case for the insects, birds, bats, etc. whose flapping frequencies the equation captures.

The authors wrote in their paper that it will need to be modified at low or very low Re, where the fluid viscosity matters more than density.

For example, they were able to work out that "for flying animals at very small Reynolds numbers, $f \propto m/A$ replaces the above."

They were also able to determine that as long as the density of animals didn't vary by an order of magnitude (i.e. a factor of 10) or more, the equation couldn't be simplified further.

The Titan submersible, operated by OceanGate Expeditions, imploded on its way to explore the wreck of the Titanic on June 18, 2023. AP

One year after Titan's fatal dive, explorers vow to pursue ocean's secrets

Associated Press

The deadly implosion of an experimental submersible en route to the deep-sea grave of the Titanic last June has not dulled the desire for further ocean exploration, despite lingering questions about the disaster.

June 18 marks one year since the Titan vanished on its way to the historic wreckage site in the North Atlantic Ocean. After a five-day search that captured attention around the world, authorities said the vessel had been destroyed and all five people on board had died.

Concerns have been raised about whether the Titan was destined for disaster because of its unconventional design and its creator's refusal to submit to independent checks that are standard in the industry.

The US Coast Guard convened a high-level investigation into what happened, but officials said the inquiry is taking longer than the initial 12-month time frame, and a planned public hearing to discuss their findings won't happen for at least another two months.

Meanwhile, deep-sea exploration continues undeterred. Numerous ocean explorers have said they are confident undersea exploration can continue safely in a post-Titan world.

"It's been a desire of the scientific community to get down into the ocean," said Greg Stone, a veteran ocean explorer and friend of Titan operator Stockton Rush, who died in the implosion. "I have not noticed any difference in the desire to

Deep-sea exploration continues undeterred. Numerous ocean explorers have said they are confident undersea exploration can continue safely in a post-Titan world

go into the ocean, exploring." OceanGate, a company co-founded by Rush that owned the submersible, suspended operations in early July. A company spokesperson declined to comment.

David Concannon, a former adviser to OceanGate, said he will mark the anniversary privately with a group of people who were involved with the company or the submersible's expeditions over the years, including scientists, volunteers and mission specialists.

The Titan had been chronicling the Titanic's decay and the underwater ecosystem around the sunken ocean liner in yearly voyages since 2021.

The craft made its last dive on June 18, 2023, a Sunday morning, and lost contact with its support vessel about two hours later. When it was reported overdue that afternoon, rescuers rushed ships, planes, and other equipment to the area.

All hope was extinguished on June 22, when the Coast Guard announced that debris had been found near the Titanic on the ocean floor. Authorities have since recovered the submersible's intact endcap, debris, and presumed human remains from the site.

In addition to Rush, the implosion killed two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; British adventurer Hamish Harding; and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet.

The group's president Richard Garriott believes the world is in a new golden age of exploration thanks to technological advances that have opened frontiers and provided new tools to more thoroughly study already visited places. The Titanic tragedy hasn't tarnished that, he said.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Numbers have celebrities, too

Vasudevan Mukunth

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

QUESTION 1

What is the lowest whole number whose name, when spelt out in English, contains the letter 'a'?

QUESTION 2

This six digit number is sometimes called by the name given to a famous fiery bird because its first six multiples (1 to 6) contain the same digits as this number does. Its seventh multiple has six digits of the same number. What is this number?

QUESTION 3

The taxicab numbers are so named because Srinivasa Ramanujan once noticed the number 1,729 — apparently the number of the cab G.H. Hardy had taken to visit Ramanujan — can be expressed as the sum of two cubes in two different ways. As it stands, 1,729 is the second taxicab number. What's the first?

QUESTION 4

The number 9 appears in a large variety of mythological and cultural contexts across time — from the nine worlds of Norse mythology to the navarasa of Indian performing arts — yet we haven't been able to find causal links between them. What's the term analytical psychologist Carl Jung used to describe such occurrences?

QUESTION 5

The numbers 30, 42, 66, 70, 78, and 102 are the first six _____ numbers. All these numbers have eight divisors each, and are not divisible by any square number. Fill in the blank.

Answers to June 13 quiz:

1. Nonmetal abundant on the earth and most abundant in the universe – **Ans: Hydrogen**
2. Sole nonmetal that's a liquid at room temperature and pressure – **Ans: Bromine**
3. Metalloids more expensive than gold – **Ans: Polonium and astatine**
4. Nonmetal with chemical symbol Sb – **Ans: Antimony**
5. Originator of theory that dry vapours from the earth produce nonmetals – **Ans: Aristotle**

Visual: **Teflon**

First contact: Irfan Ali | Rahul Nair | K.N. Viswanathan | Anmol Agrawal | Pranav Anand

Visual:Name this warrior who also appears in Homer's 'Iliad'. His name is used to describe numbers that are powerful but not perfect powers — just like him. EUGENE ROMANENKO (CC BY 2.0)

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Former councillors oppose proposal to split BBMP

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Karnataka government reportedly being keen to split the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) into multiple corporations has now angered former councillors cutting across party lines as they were not consulted before the decision. They also see this as a ploy by the city MLAs to further delay civic polls, due since September 2020.

Former councillors citing failure of this model in Delhi argue that splitting the BBMP will not help Bengaluru resolve the governance issues the city faces presently. They argue that the London's Borough model would not work for Bengaluru and alleged the city MLAs were pushing for this.

A former councillor from Congress talking to *The Hindu* said "Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar have not even consulted a single councillor before taking the decision. The councillors who manage the State of affairs at the ward level have a better understanding of what the city needs than the local MLAs." He further said that the current proposal to divide the civic body into four or five corporations with 400 wards would not bring any ease of administration, but will only add financial disparity between these corporations.

They also see this as a ploy by city MLAs to further delay civic polls due since September 2020

Another former councillor said elected representatives in the wards are the wheels of Bengaluru, without them the city will not function properly. Leaving these people out in such a major decision was wrong.

N.R. Ramesh, a former BJP councillor said Delhi City Corporation, which was split when the BJP was in power, was a failure and it was later merged again. "After splitting into East, South, and North corporations, East was gathering ₹11,000 crore revenue, while South was collecting ₹1,800 crore. The North was collecting ₹4,200 crore. The South was not able to implement development projects. In a similar way here in Bengaluru, the corporation that will have Mahadevapura will become the richest because of the 3856 IT companies located there. This corporation will collect more property tax. The corporation which will have the West and Dasarahalli will not have adequate revenue base at all," he said.

50th edition of Vichaarmanthan held

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Kristu Jayanti College hosted the 50th edition of Vichaarmanthan: An Interaction with Global and Indian Visionaries on Monday. A book titled 'Bharat's Brilliant Stateswoman: Anandiben Patel, leading with Grace', written by S.C. Sharma, former NAAC Director, and Fr. Dr. Augustine George was released.

Even if split, BBMP to have single account for revenue collection

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

While councillors are expressing apprehensions about disparity in revenue generation if the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is split, sources in the government say that there will be one designated account for revenue, which will be handled by the apex body governing the corporations.

Anekal, Electronics City and other areas that currently do not fall under the BBMP will be included under its jurisdiction, and there would be around 400 wards. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

A source, who attended the meeting in connection with carving out three or five corporations, said the government of Karnataka had decided to set up one account to manage revenue keeping in mind the economic health of these proposed corporations. From this account, money will be redistributed for developmental activities based on needs of the proposed corporations.

The government will table the bill to split the BBMP in the upcoming Assembly session.

Anekal, Electronics City, and other areas that currently do not fall under the BBMP will be included under its jurisdiction, and there would be around 400 wards. However, there is a difference of opinion on the number of corporations. While the majority of them want to split the BBMP into five corporations, some are demanding to limit the number to three.

Both Congress and BJP councillors whom *The Hindu* spoke to said the government is emulating the model (multiple corporations) prevalent in London. They predicted that the model would fail, as, they claim, it did in Delhi. The councillors predict that the corporations that collect more property tax will become richer while the rest will become poorer. This will hamper developmental activities, they claim.

G.C. Chandrashekar, Rajya Sabha MP, who is in charge of the Bengaluru division of the Congress, said the party is ready for elections to the BBMP, and there is absolutely no intention of delaying the same.

But sources claimed that the party is in no mood to hold polls at this juncture, as it is on the backfoot in Bengaluru. In the present structure of the BBMP and wards, the BJP has the upper hand.

This is also one of the reasons for the proposal to split the BBMP, they claimed.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, JUN. 18	
RISE	05:54 SET 18:48
RISE	15:32 SET 02:34
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 19	
RISE	05:55 SET 18:48
RISE	16:25 SET 03:16
THURSDAY, JUN. 20	
RISE	05:55 SET 18:48
RISE	17:22 SET 04:02

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	32	25
Mysuru	31	22
Bengaluru	30	21

Bengaluru Today
29°C Morning will be pleasant Day will be slight warm and humid. Spell of light rain and thundershower is likely to occur. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
30°C The weather will be slight warm and humid Spell of light rain and thundershower with gusty winds may occur.

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THE HINDU
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ISSN 0971 - 751X

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Surge in gold, silver imports from the UAE in 2023-24

210 in percentage. India's gold and silver imports from its free trade agreement partner UAE have skyrocketed to $10.7 billion in 2023-24 and there is a need to potentially revise the concessional customs duty rates under the pact to mitigate the arbitrage driving this surge, according to Global Trade Research Initiative. PTI

Amount spent to advertise Trump's conviction by Biden

50 in $ million. U.S. President Joe Biden's re-election campaign is spending $50 million through the end of June, a blitz that includes its first television ad trumpeting Donald Trump's felony conviction and signals that the Democratic incumbent is seeking to make his Republican opponent's legal woes a bigger issue heading into November. AP

Expected credit growth for SBI in current fiscal

14 in percentage. Given the current economic growth rate, the State Bank of India is expecting loan growth during the fiscal year 2024-25, the bank's chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said. "Normally the way we look at it is that the GDP growth rate plus inflation and 2-3% over that. That gives us the number around 14% or so," the bank's chairman said. PTI

Countries that modernised nuclear arsenals in 2023

9 Nuclear-armed nations including the U.S., the U.K., Russia, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel continued to modernise their nuclear arsenals and several of them deployed new nuclear-capable weapon systems in 2023, according to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The nine nations spent a combined total of $91.4 billion on their arsenals in 2023. PTI

Germany's biggest industrial union seeks raise for workers

7 in percentage. IG Metall union, Germany's biggest industrial union will seek an increase in pay for 3.9 million workers in negotiations starting later this year. The organisation argues that companies including automakers and machinery manufacturers are in a position to afford it. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Laws on mercenaries in war zones

Indian nationals tricked by the promise of lucrative jobs in Russia have died fighting on the frontlines. As states are increasingly hiring private military companies to operate in conflict zones — can they qualify as mercenaries under international law? How can India secure the interests of its overseas migrant workers?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

On June 11, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) acknowledged the tragic loss of two Indian nationals who were recruited by the Russian Army amidst the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The MEA in a press statement said that the Indian Embassy in Moscow has strongly raised this issue with the Russian Ambassador in New Delhi and authorities in Moscow, seeking the swift release and return of all Indian nationals currently serving in the Russian Army.

In February, *The Hindu* reported for the first time that Indians were getting killed while fighting on behalf of Russia in the Ukraine war. Over the past year, nearly 100 Indians have been recruited by the Russian Army after being reportedly duped by agents with the lure of money and a Russian passport. Contracts signed by these recruits stipulate a "no leave or exit policy" before six months of service, with salaries amounting to ₹1.5 lakh to ₹2 lakh per month. In January, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree simplifying the process of obtaining Russian citizenship for foreigners who sign a minimum of one-year contract with the Army.

At least 30 Indians have so far contacted the MEA and the Indian Embassy in Moscow, seeking help to return. The deaths of the two Indian nationals highlight a disturbing reality – Indians are increasingly falling prey to labour trafficking rackets after being unable to secure jobs domestically leading to their recruitment as mercenaries in international armed conflicts.

Mercenaries qualify for humane treatment in accordance with the fundamental guarantees of humanitarian law as outlined under Article 75 Article 47 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. AP

What has been the MEA's response?

The MEA has issued a press note advising Indians to exercise caution while seeking employment opportunities in Russia. In March, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said that it had filed a first information report (FIR) booking 15 individuals and four companies for their alleged role in the "trafficking of gullible Indian nationals to Russia and duping them for better employment and high-paying jobs". In May, the central agency divulged that it had made four arrests in the case.

Who are mercenaries?

The distinction between conventional combatants and mercenaries is a fundamental cornerstone of international humanitarian law (IHL). A combatant is typically a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict, whereas a mercenary is recruited from a third-party state unrelated to the conflict. Mercenaries usually engage in hostilities motivated primarily by personal gain as opposed to virtues of patriotism associated with regular combatants.

Article 47 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (API) envisages six cumulative conditions for a person to qualify as a mercenary. The person i) should be specially recruited locally or abroad in order to fight in an armed conflict, ii) has taken a direct part in the hostilities, iii) is motivated to take part in the hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain and, in fact, is promised, by or on behalf of a party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar ranks and functions in the armed forces of that party, iv) is neither a national of a party to the conflict nor a resident of territory controlled by a party to the conflict, v) is not a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict, vi) has not been sent by a state which is not a party to the conflict on official duty as a member of its armed forces.

Under customary IHL, being a mercenary itself does not constitute a specific crime. However, if captured, they are not entitled to prisoner-of-war status or any protected categories under the Geneva Conventions.

This allows for their prosecution for war crimes or other grave breaches of humanitarian law.

They may also face charges under the domestic laws of the detaining nation. Nevertheless, mercenaries qualify for humane treatment in accordance with the fundamental guarantees of humanitarian law, as outlined under Article 75 of the API.

However, over time, African states began expressing reservations about this definition, as it only addressed international armed conflicts and overlooked civil wars, where mercenary activities were most prevalent. This led to the adoption of the Organization of African Unity Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa in 1977 which included a more expansive definition of mercenaries.

Similarly, in 1989, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries that criminalised the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries and also promoted inter-State cooperation in this regard.

The charter also widened the prevailing definition of mercenaries as provided under the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions to include "persons recruited for the purpose of participating in a concerted act of violence aimed at overthrowing a government or otherwise undermining the constitutional order of a State, or at undermining the territorial integrity of a State."

What are the limitations of the existing regime?

One of the major challenges of the existing regulatory regime is the lack of a clear, unequivocal, and comprehensive legal definition of what constitutes a mercenary. This is compounded by the fact that the domestic laws of most states do not criminalise mercenary activity. Additionally, the definition outlined under Article 47 of the API does not include within its ambit foreign military personnel integrated into the armed forces of another state – such as the Gurkhas (soldiers from Nepal who have served in the British Army since the 1800s). It also fails to establish mechanisms for holding accountable foreigners employed as advisors and trainers.

Dr. Shubha Prasad, Assistant Professor of International Relations at the Hertie School, Berlin highlighted the emerging trend of private military and security companies (PMSCs) gradually taking over roles previously associated with mercenaries. "These for-profit companies provide a range of services from combat to food supplies for troops. The legal framework surrounding the operations of PMSCs is more loosely defined and relies heavily on a country's domestic legal capacity", she said.

For instance, the operations of the controversial Wagner Group in Russia have been increasingly subjected to international scrutiny. Despite being registered as a private entity, it reportedly includes Russian Army veterans among its ranks. While the direct participation of the Wagner Group has been evident in the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the Kremlin had never formally acknowledged its connections with it. This has posed challenges in calling for accountability and assessing whether the group qualifies as a mercenary organisation. However, following the military corporation's aborted attempt at a coup last year, President Vladimir Putin acknowledged that it had received tens of billions of rubles in public money from the government.

"Signatories to the Montreux Doctrine have committed to stronger state oversight of private military and security actors. States are obliged to check whether PMSCs comply with international humanitarian and human rights laws. However, neither India nor Russia is a signatory to this document. That does not preclude India from imposing tighter restrictions on the recruitment of Indian nationals for such enterprises. Furthermore, we need stronger international legal frameworks to safeguard individuals who are coerced or misled into contracting with PMSCs", Dr. Prasad added.

What is the way forward

According to Dr. Prasad, the Indian government should develop a robust policy framework to address distress migration and implement strict measures against human trafficking. "India should adopt a two-pronged approach," she suggested. "Long-term preventive measures should target the underlying economic factors that are driving people to leave the country, while immediate measures should prioritise educating the public and ensuring strong pre-travel vetting for Indians going to Russia or other conflict zones".

For instance, she pointed out that pre-travel approval from the MEA for travel to Russia could be another measure to check if there are suspicious cases of human trafficking. This will also enable the identification of companies that are exploiting Indians, she added.

In 2012, Bangladesh implemented the Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity for ethical overseas recruitment of migrants. The Nepal government in January banned its citizens from travelling to Russia or Ukraine for employment after 10 young men were killed and dozens more reported missing while fighting, predominately in the Russian military.

THE GIST

- Over the past year, nearly 100 Indians have been recruited by the Russian Army after being reportedly duped by agents with the lure of money and a Russian passport.
- The distinction between conventional combatants and mercenaries is a fundamental cornerstone of international humanitarian law (IHL). A combatant is typically a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict, whereas a mercenary is recruited from a third-party state unrelated to the conflict. Mercenaries usually engage in hostilities motivated primarily by personal gain as opposed to virtues of patriotism associated with regular combatants.
- One of the major challenges of the existing regulatory regime is the lack of a clear, unequivocal, and comprehensive legal definition of what constitutes a mercenary. This is compounded by the fact that the domestic laws of most states do not criminalise mercenary activity. The Indian government should develop a robust policy framework to address distress migration and implement strict measures against human trafficking.

POCSO case: BSY appears before CID

Former Chief Minister denies allegation that he assaulted 17-year-old girl

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Former Chief Minister and BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa, who is accused in a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) case, appeared before the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for investigation on Monday.

On June 13, the first fast track court had issued non-bailable warrant against Mr. Yediyurappa and he moved the High Court seeking anticipatory bail and quashing of the FIR. The High Court stayed his arrest until the next hearing scheduled on June 28 and directed the octogenarian to appear before the CID on June 17. As per instructions, he arrived at the CID office in the morning.

According to sources in the CID, the investigation officers recorded the statement of Mr. Yediyurappa. He left the office in the afternoon. A source said Mr. Yediyurappa has denied the allegations of molestation levelled by the 17-year-old victim and her deceased mother.

Senior BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa arriving at the CID office for interrogation in Bengaluru on Monday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

On March 14, the Sadashivanagar police booked the former Chief Minister based on a complaint filed by the mother of the girl. The complainant alleged that he had sexually assaulted the girl at his residence in Dollar's Colony on February 2 when they had visited his house seeking help in a cheating case and another POCSO case filed in 2015.

The mother died at a private hospital at Hulimavu on May 26, after she complained of breathlessness.

Journalism award

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

M. Nagaraja, Deputy Editor of Prajavani in Bengaluru, has been chosen for the Khadri Shamanna Journalism Award.

The award instituted by the Khadri Shamanna Memorial Trust, Melkote, is given to an eminent journalist from Karnataka. The award will be conferred on Mr. Nagaraja on June 22 at an event to be held on Seshadripuram College premises at 10.30 a.m.

Books invited

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, has invited books for Kannada Krishi Pustaka Prashasti 2023 from writers who have written on agriculture in Kannada. They can send 3 copies of their books to UAS, GKVK campus, by July 15. Visit http://uasbangalore.edu.in or call 080-23330153 for more details.

BJP will continue fight till fuel price hike is rolled back: Vijayendra

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Leader of the Opposition in Assembly R. Ashok at the protest in Bengaluru on Monday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

The BJP staged a State-wide protest against the hike in petrol and diesel prices in Karnataka on Monday. The Opposition party declared that its struggle against the State government would continue till the hike in petroleum prices is rolled back.

"The BJP will continue its fight till the government withdraws the hike in prices," BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra told supporters at Freedom Park in Bengaluru where BJP legislators and MPs had gathered to protest.

Describing the hike as 'stupid and anti-people', he said it is the responsibility of the BJP as the Opposition party to ensure justice for poor people, farmers, and common people.

He claimed that the Congress had hiked fuel prices as it was frustrated with its single-digit tally in the Lok Sabha polls despite heading the government in Karnataka. Also, several MLAs of the Congress were expressing dissatisfaction over the guarantee schemes, adding to the party's frustration, he alleged.

Ridiculing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for the hike, which would in turn trigger a rise in prices of essential commodities, Mr. Vijayendra wondered if the CM had lost the pro-people concern that he had displayed while in the Opposition.

He accused the Congress government of pushing the State to the brink of bankruptcy within a year of taking over the reigns of the administration. "The government does not have money to fund development works," he alleged.

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok said: "Mr. Siddaramaiah had opposed the hike in prices of petroleum products when he was in the Opposition. Now, he is defending it." Referring to the resignation of Nagendra from the Ministry in connection with alleged financial fraud of ₹187 crore in the Valmiki ST Development Corporation, he said the second one to step down would be Mr. Siddaramaiah.

High Court grants 15 days' bail to rape accused to marry 'victim' lover

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has granted 15 days' bail to a 23-year-old youth, who is facing the charge of raping his minor lover, to marry her. The family members now want the duo to get married as the girl, who recently completed 18 years of age, has also given birth to a child, and the DNA test has proved youth as the child's biological father.

Enlarging the petitioner-accused on bail till July 3 for the purpose of marriage, the court asked him to submit the certificate of marriage on the next date of hearing, July 4, while asking him to return to prison on July 3 evening.

"This course is taken owing to the peculiarity obtained in the facts and circumstances of the case at hand, as the mother has to bring up the child. The newborn does not know as to what has happened. It should not suffer ignominy of any kind in future. Therefore, to protect the interest of the child and also responsibility of the mother in bringing up the child, this direction is found necessary to be issued," the court said.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the interim order on a petition filed by accused, a native of Mysuru district, for quashing the charge sheet filed against him as his parents and the girl's mother now want to perform their marriage.

The petitioner-youth was arrested in February 2023 on the complaint of the girl's mother alleging that he had repeatedly committed sexual assault on the girl, who was at the time of registration of the case 16 years and nine months of age. The police had booked him under Section 376(2)(n) of IPC and Sections 5(L), 5(j)(ii) and 6 of POCSO Act, 2012

"In the peculiar circumstances, as the mother has to bring up the child at this tender age, looking at the fate of the mother and the child who are in dire straits, I deem it appropriate to redeem the grievance of the families by permitting the petitioner to get married to the victim, who is now more than 18 years old..." the court observed.

Fuel price in Karnataka lower than BJP-ruled States even after hike: CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at a press meet in Bengaluru on Monday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

In a counter to the Opposition BJP's protest against hike in fuel prices in Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said that even after the increase in the sales tax on petrol and diesel, the price here is lower than the South Indian and BJP-ruled States.

Addressing a press conference, Mr. Siddaramaiah maintained that the NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi created an environment in which the necessity of tax hike was inevitable and claimed that the situation was created due to non-payment of the State's share in the tax.

After the hike, price of petrol and diesel in Bengaluru is ₹102.86 and 88.94 per litre, respectively, against ₹107.4 and 95.64 in the Congress-ruled Telangana (Hyderabad). The fuel prices are less compared to prices in BJP-ruled Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the Chief Minister said.

The State government increased the fuel price by about ₹3 each on petrol and diesel on Saturday.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said the fuel price hike would generate an additional resource of ₹3,000 crore and the amount would be paid to the State treasury to be utilised for people's welfare programmes.

In an obvious reference to allegations that the government had increased fuel prices to fund guarantees, he said the State government would spend ₹60,000 crore to implement "guarantee" schemes in 2024-25. The BJP leaders had alleged that the State had become bankrupt and all development works had come to a standstill in the State by implementing "guarantees".

After rolling out GST, the CM said the Centre had limited the scope for mobilisation resources for States. The States had no sources except stamp duty, registration, vehicle tax, sales tax on petrol, diesel and liquor, he said.

Former MLC Bhanuprakash dead

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

M.B. Bhanuprakash

Senior BJP leader and former MLC M.B. Bhanuprakash died within minutes after taking part in a protest against the rise in fuel prices in Shivamogga on Monday. He was 69 years old.

Mr. Bhanuprakash took part in the BJP's protest against the price rise at Seenappa Shetti Circle (Gopi Circle) in the city. He spoke against the State government's decision to increase the sales tax on petrol and diesel.

As he collapsed, party leaders accompanying him, took him to a private hospital nearby. The staff performed CPR as per the protocol. However, by the time he reached the hospital, there was no pulse. He could have died of sudden cardiac arrest, according to hospital sources.

Mr. Bhanuprakash is survived by his wife and three sons. He has been active with the RSS since his childhood days. He was once elected to gram panchayat and zilla panchayat, before getting elected to the Legislative Council. He contested from Shivamogga Lok Sabha constituency and lost.

The final rites were held at his native place, Mattur, near Shivamogga, in the evening.

Former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, State BJP president B.Y. Vijayendra, and others mourned his death. Mr. Yediyurappa said Mr. Bhanuprakash's death was a shock. He was a loyal Swayamsevak. He worked for the party till his last breath.

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Alagarkoil, Melur Taluk, Madurai District.

E-TENDER NOTICE (TWO COVER SYSTEM)
Tender Calling No : 3400/2023 / B2, Dated.14.06.2024

Madurai District, Melur Taluk, Alagarkoil Deputy Commissioner / Executive Officer of Arulmigu Kallalagar Temple invites **TWO COVER** system e-tender for the following works. The e-tender documents are available from **21.06.2024 to 23.07.2024 up to 5.45 pm** and it can be downloaded from the website **www.tenders.tn.gov.in** at free of cost. The e-tender documents are to be uploaded through online on (or) Before **24.07.2024 at 11.00 AM.** Received tenders will be opened on **24.07.2024 at 3.30 PM** through online Important document and tender documents are to be downloaded from the website **www.tenders.tn.gov.in**

S.No	Name of Work	Approximate value of work Rs.	EMD Rs.	Period of Completion	Contractors Qualification
1	Construction of Yathri Nivas, Archagar Quarters, Guest House, Restaurants, Shops, Toilet Block, Over Head Tank, Parking, STP and Renovation of Fort wall in Arulmigu Kallalagar Thirukoil, Alagarkoil, Melur Taluk, Madurai District.	36,89,76,298	18,55,000	18 Months	Registered, Live qualified contractors of Tamil Nadu Government departments / state government undertakings
2	Construction of Staff Quarters Building in Arulmigu Kallalagar Thirukoil, Alagarkoil, Melur Taluk, Madurai District.	8,76,38,086	4,49,000	12 Months	

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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

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Rishika, Ranjit & Arnav
&
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Contact: 9606316633

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform you about the passing away of our loved & respected mother.

Mrs. BRINDA SHANKAR
on 16 June, 2024.
Beloved wife of
(Late) Mr. Vijay N. Shankar,
she will forever be cherished and remembered fondly by the many whose hearts & lives she touched.
In Grief
Tanya & Govinda Berry
Lara & Manu Chandra
Arjun, Karan, Sahil, Rishabh
Sivappa, Shankar, Saxena & Bahadur Families

BIRTH CENTENARY

100th CENTENARY BIRTHDAY
18.06.2024 (1924-2024)
Late. Shri A. Ananthanarayanan
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DEATH

SAD DEMISE

Dr. A. S. Arvind
18-04-1954 - 16-06-2024

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of Dr. A. S. Arvind. He was a distinguished physician and a remarkable administrator, whose career was marked by compassion, integrity, and a commitment to excellence. He touched the lives of many with his kindness and wisdom.

In Fond Remembrance
Dr. Kamini. A. Rao,
Pooja Rao, Sidharth Rao, and Poorvi Rao
Dr. Vyshnavi Rao, Dr. Prashant C.D, Daivik and Avni
Sandhya Rao Atignal

BUILDING BLOCKS

How diapers use quantum physics to attend to nature's call

Whether something absorbs or repels water has to do with microscopic forces and the nature of a material. The mesh-like molecular structure of a super-absorbent polymer (SAP) and the presence of sodium in it help diapers absorb large quantities of water

Cotton works great when you need to absorb small amounts of water, but when you need to absorb the litres of fluids your baby is producing overnight, something more remarkable is required. GETTY IMAGES

Adhip Agarwala

Still wondering what you should gift your friends who have just turned parents? Think no more and buy a bunch of diapers. This sleep-giving, time-relieving, and peace-conferring machinery has been providing the only solace young parents can often find between all the screaming and food-throwing their adorable babies are doing. Just wrap this soft, powdery white packet around the baby's buttocks, and from a few hours to even a whole night it will make sure the baby – and consequently you – will be able to get some more sleep.

But have you ever wondered how it is that a diaper is able to soak so much liquid? We all know a few things can soak water around us, such as our cotton clothes, and a few things that don't, such as our rubber shoes. What is in that diaper that it seems to be able to absorb so much more?

This has some of the most beautiful pieces of physics we see around us. But before we do that, let's find out why some things soak water and some things don't.

The case of cotton

Whether something absorbs or repels water has to do with microscopic forces and the nature of a material. Water, the all prevailing, life sustaining liquid we are so used to, is a remarkable thing. Its smallest constituent is a molecule made of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom.

While every atom here is charge neutral – i.e. it has an equal number of positively charged protons and negatively charged electrons – something funny happens. Two electrons, one each from every hydrogen atom, decide to shift a bit towards the larger oxygen atom (thanks to a pull exerted by the latter). Thus the oxygen atoms become more negatively charged and the hydrogen atoms become more positively charged.

Thus we can think of every molecule as a big-headed monkey with two hands.

The molecules of a diaper

When you place your cotton handkerchief on the water you accidentally spilled on the table, the water molecules meet the molecules of the cotton fibres.

These fibres are big networks of molecules called polymers, and they have a bunch of slightly positive and negatively charged ions sitting everywhere. So as soon as you place the cotton on the water, the water molecules see this big network like a bunch of hungry monkeys meeting a jungle of dense trees.

The water molecules now experience forces leading them to rush to the ions, climbing over various molecules of cotton. In the process the water is soaked up and your handkerchief becomes wet.

This also means that whether some material will soak or not soak water depends on the kind of ions it is made of. For example, synthetic rubber is again made of a type of network of molecules, but it deliberately has ions that repel water molecules.

So the water molecules are not inclined to enter them at all. Cotton absorbs water quite well and therefore it is no wonder you see it everywhere, including as cotton balls in the handy medical kit.

Cotton works great when you need to absorb small amounts of water, but when you need to absorb the litres of fluids your baby is producing overnight, clearly something more remarkable is required. That magic material is called a super-absorbent polymer (SAP).

If you wish to see this material, grab hold of a pair of scissors and cut open an unused diaper or sanitary pad. Beneath all the cotton tissue and fragrances, you will come across a whitish power. This is SAP.

The molecular structure of this compound again resembles the complicated mesh of a tree. As soon as it comes in contact with water, water molecules flow through and sit inside. The oxygen atoms in particular are attracted to the mesh due to the presence of an important ion in SAP called sodium – the same sodium that is in your salt and often goes off the charts if you don't hydrate yourself properly in the summer.

Sodium-water bond

Sodium and water have some unspeakable love for each other that they remain stuck together when given a chance. This is the same reason salt – in the form of a compound of sodium and chlorine – dissolves in water. Here, sodium ions leave the chlorine ions for water molecules, and in the process the salt dissolves.

Anyway, because of the oxygen, the water molecules go and attach themselves to the sodium ions in the SAP trees. Their monkey hands are however still free. They start to hold each other and form a strong network that can no longer move, i.e. it is rigid. The whole network swells, trapping the water molecules within, to form what is called a gel.

Thus, SAP is a magical compound that can absorb a large amount of water, at times more than its own weight.

Quantum physics in the fray

You may still wonder why it is that sodium ions have this fascination with water. What kind of other ions can we use that would change this physics? What if, instead of water, there was some other liquid that has to be soaked up?

The reason why sodium and oxygen atoms want to come closer is that they wish to share an electron.

As a child, we are made to think of an electron as a small table-tennis ball zipping around a much larger nucleus, like a basketball. Like everything else in this world, this is not the complete picture.

The electron is really a wave, and it can be shared by two atoms at the same time thanks to the rules of quantum physics. In fact, nature prefers this arrangement: to have the electron to live in the shared world of oxygen + sodium. And this is what drives water molecules towards the sodium ions in a diaper.

If you want to understand this better, you should consider taking an undergraduate course in physics, such as here at IIT Kanpur, where some of us teach.

The next time you wrap a diaper around your baby and plan to catch a good night's sleep, remember to thank the tiny electrons and the quantum physics that are really attending to nature's call.

Adhip Agarwala is an assistant professor of physics at IIT Kanpur.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

A quiz on the COPA AMERICA Football Championship that begins in the U.S. on June 20

Soorya Prakash N

QUESTION #1
How many countries each from the CONMEBOL and the CONCACAF continental confederations bodies are participating in the Copa America 2024?

QUESTION #2
Which two countries have won the Championship the most number of times?

QUESTION #3
Which are the two countries out of 10 from CONMEBOL national teams that have not won the Championship yet?

QUESTION #4
Which country is making its debut in the 2024 edition?

QUESTION #5
Among the current crop of players, who holds the record for having played in most matches?

QUESTION #6
In 1959, two editions of the Copa America were played. Which two countries hosted the tournaments?

QUESTION #7
Who was the first player to officially win the best player of the tournament award?

Visual question: Identify this person who is the only player to win Copa America both as a player and a coach. AFP

Answers to the previous day's quiz:
1. June 17 marks the end of Iceland's centuries old ties with which country. **Ans:- Denmark** 2. What is the Capital of Iceland and what distinction does it hold as regards its location? **Ans:- Reykjavík. It is the most northerly capital in the world** 3. Name the Icelandic parliament which is one of oldest surviving parliaments in the world. **Ans:- Alþingi** 4. Name the Icelandic saga that is considered one of the greatest prose works of medieval literature? **Ans:- Saga of the Volsungs** 5. The 'Hakarl', an Icelandic national dish, is made using the rotten meat of which marine animal that has been cured with a fermentation process and hung to dry in an open air shed **Ans:- Greenland shark or basking shark** 6. Which late American sporting legend, who won the World championship in his sport at Reykjavik in 1972 but became a recluse, was granted an Icelandic citizenship in 2005? **Ans:- Bobby Fischer** Visual question: If the colours white and blue in the Icelandic flag represent the snow and ocean, what does red represent? **Ans:- The volcanoes**

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

Does 'dinner' refer to a meal at mid-day or night? (A.K. Misra, Patna)

It could refer to either – i.e., it could be a meal taken at mid day, or in the evening. A dinner is usually the main meal of the day. When people have it, depends to a large extent on their eating habits and their social background. In Britain, people belonging to the working class have their dinner in the afternoon. The middle and upper middle classes have theirs in the evening.

Till the late 19th Century, everyone used to follow the example of the working class people – i.e., they all had their dinner at mid-day. This was the time when Britain still retained its rural culture. Farmers, their helpers, office goers used to return home around mid-day for their dinner. For the evening meal, they had something light to eat – and they called this light evening meal "supper".

During the early part of the 20th Century, things began to change. Britain became more and more urbanised: and this brought about a change not only in the lifestyle of the people, but also in their eating habits. People belonging to the middle and upper middle classes no longer wanted a heavy meal (dinner) at mid-day; they wanted something light.

This light meal in the afternoon is called 'lunch'. Because of the introduction of lunch, the main meal of the day was shifted to the evening. That is how dinner became an evening meal for the middle and upper middle classes.

We often read in the papers of Prime Minister and Presidents hosting a dinner in honour of someone. Such dinners are given in the evening – not at mid-day. These days, dinner is used more often to indicate an elaborate, formal meal. What we eat every day in the evening is 'supper'. A 'dinner' is an elaborate meal to which we invite others or to which we are invited.

Conserve, preserve (S. Radhika. New Delhi)

The word 'conserve' means 'use less, use sparingly, not waste'. We must conserve water during summer. The marathon runner must learn to conserve his energy. We must learn to conserve our natural resources. In these sentences, the word 'conserve' is used in the broad sense of 'keep safe', not 'waste'.

The word 'preserve' like 'conserve' carries with it the meaning to 'keep safe'. But that is only part of the evening. The word 'preserve' is form the Latin *praeservare,* meaning 'forekeep' – i.e., to keep (something) in safety for future use. When you preserve an item, you keep it safe by letting it remain the way it is. You take every precaution to ensure that it does not change – things must remain as they are now for future use.

Take for example the following two sentences. 'We must preserve water' and 'We must conserve water'. In the latter sentence, you are allowed to use the water – drink it, use it for washing purposes etc. In 'preserving water', you are not allowed to use the water. It is to remain as it is – untouched and unused.

Word of the day

Sojourn:
a temporary stay

Synonyms: stay, visit, stopover, holiday

Usage: *On a recent sojourn in Sicily, I frequently found myself visiting picturesque places.*

Pronunciation: https://bit.ly/sojournnew

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈsɒdʒ.ɜːn/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

A conference on the science of wildlife ecology

The inaugural IWEC saw several symposia, panel discussions and meetings bringing together researchers in Indian wildlife ecology across taxa, landscapes, ecosystems, and disciplines

Ananya Bejoy
Diya Vinekar
BENGALURU

Panel focusing on Artificial Intelligence and Wildlife Ecology Research.

Introductory Session of The Wildlife Ecology Conference 2024 at NCBS.

Stands and stalls displaying online portals (CEASE - protection against sexual harassment in the workplace).

The inaugural Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference (IWEC) 2024 was " born from the collective aspiration of researchers and institutions in India to discuss the science of wildlife ecology, network and collaborate, and support the discipline's growth." as the website puts it. The three-day-long event, held at NCBS, Bengaluru, between June 14 -16, sought to be a platform "for the professional exchange of ideas and research findings, to encourage communication and collaborations across disciplines, and to promote professional growth and career development." In keeping with this aim, the event saw several symposia, panel discussions and meetings occur, bringing together researchers in Indian wildlife ecology across taxa, landscapes, ecosystems, and disciplines.

Here is a brief of some of the conversations that took place at the conference.

A panel discussion on AI and wildlife

"AI is everywhere...infiltrating our lives, whether we like it or not," says scientist and social impact partitioner Sarika Khanwilkar. Sarika, who was recently moderating a session titled *Artificial Intelligence and Wildlife Ecology Research,* adds that she herself uses AI tools in her research. "I have an in-depth understanding of its merits and limitations," she says.

These merits and limitations were discussed at large by the rest of the panel, comprising interdisciplinary researcher Akanksha Rathore, software engineer Alok Talekar, wildlife biologist MD Madhusudan and academician Saket Anand. Akanksha, who uses AI to study animal groups and their behaviour in the wild, says that the technology can be useful in making predictions that help decision-making. Artificial Intelligence, she believes, has the potential to take us in a good direction, if adopted judiciously, something Saket seems to agree with. "Machine learning and AI are tools that will help you if you use it right," he says, adding that they could help with doing research more effectively.

While the other panellists, too, agree on the merits of AI in research, they also bring up their concerns with this technology. "I often wonder about where technology stops and we enter the human domain," says Madhusudan, while Alok believes that while AI has its uses, it cannot be a solution for everything. "We need a human in the loop somewhere for things that are sensitive," he believes.

Also, as with any tool, it can and has been used for both good and bad things. Akanksha talks about how, while training guards in drone technology, she encountered one who wanted to use it in a somewhat unethical way. Since he was also a tour guide, he asked if he could use it to understand patterns when hyenas came out, she recalls, "These are all things that fall into AI ethics and concerns." Madhusudan, unlike the other panellists who appear to be carefully optimistic about the technology, is clearly an AI sceptic. "I am a biologist, and I still depend a lot on the old-fashioned human smarts that we have used," he says, adding that even when looking at satellite imagery and so on, he relies on biological understanding and intuition. While not disputing the vast possibilities of AI, "he feels more comfortable questioning technology than the biology," he admits.

Campus was well decked out and on theme for the event.

More importantly, however, "both ecology and AI are situated in society and that society is a complex place," he states, going on to question the point that technology and its tools are not intrinsically good or bad. While, for the most part, it is true that technology and tools assume the moral valency of their user, there is one fundamental difference with AI when compared to other technologies and tools since it is a direct reflection of the society that made it. AI, therefore, needs to have a moral compass, believes Madhusudan. "It has taken a large part of human history to realize that human life is precious, and all humans have value," he says pointing out that AI also has the potential to learn inequality, prejudice, unfairness, deceit and greed. "Can we be sure that we are building something that does not hold a black mirror to us? This is an answer to which we can't be completely sure of," he says.

Symposia on various aspects of ecology

Over these three days, several symposia took place, including those on plant phenology, small cats, raptors, marine flagship species, bat research, insects, and more.

Participants displaying their research through vibrant posters.

Sneha Shahi, a PhD student, who was presenting a paper on river ecology spoke about the need for targeted restoration efforts in urbanized zones to safeguard river ecosystems. "We often forget to take into consideration the habitat assessment of these rivers" says Sneha Shahi, a PhD student, going on to talk about the ecological dynamics of a perennial river originating from the Agasthyamalai hills in Southern Tamil Nadu. She highlights the relationship between society and ecology, stressing the impact of human activities on river health and why we need to conserve these rivers.

Another aspect discussed at these symposia was the proliferation of the African sharp tooth catfish, which has been declared as one of fourteen highly invasive fishes identified in Indian waters. While the government of India has banned its rearing and selling, this catfish, known for its high adaptability, air breathability and rapid breeding, currently poses a severe threat to local biodiversity. Speakers proposed stringent measures to curb its spread and mitigate ecological damage, including the need for timely government intervention.

Preserving grasslands

Studies on the critically endangered Bengal Florican and the endangered Pygmy Hogs of Orang National Park were used to highlight the need for better grassland conservation efforts. In fact, even studying these animals was a task, says academician Karishma Sharma."It (Bengal Florican) does not readily come out, and it has been a real pain to actually spot in the grassland for the past few days I have worked," she says of this bird that faces severe habitat challenges, exacerbated by human activities like cattle overgrazing.

In the case of the pygmy hog, it has gone from critically endangered to endangered, according to researcher Jonmani Kalita. "It got a recovery boost by 8% from 2008 to 2015," he says. Having said that, we have a long way to go in protecting these rare fauna, both of which are Schedule I species.

Engaging displays

The conference also featured vibrant poster presentations showcasing diverse research initiatives across India, ranging from butterfly pollination patterns in West Bengal to the social dynamics amongst female elephant clans in Karnataka. Further, important social portals and platforms, such as Conservationists and Ecologists Against Sexual Harassment (CEASE), highlighted the importance of a safe work environment within scientific fields, offering POSH Act 2013 guidelines. Another interesting display was the Conservation Society, India's 'BlueMAP-India' project, a display that integrates art and policy to foster public engagement and conservation awareness.

Redefining gender inclusivity through linguistic evolution

A recent discussion on gender inclusivity and the importance of language held by AnitaB.org in collaboration with OnPurpose Consulting group aimed to explore how language shapes our understanding and treatment of gender

Debasmita Chowdhury
BENGALURU

Language, the cornerstone of human interaction, has been evolving towards being more inclusive and dignified. Linguistic choices are not merely about grammar; they embody the respect and relational dynamics within a community.

A recent discussion on gender inclusivity and the importance of language held by AnitaB.org in collaboration with OnPurpose Consulting group aimed to explore how language shapes our understanding and treatment of gender.

AnitaB.org is an organisation that works with with women and non-binary technologists to address issues such as pay parity, equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Research indicates that words carry inherent biases and connotations that can vary by gender. Terms like ambition, shame, guilt, and confidence often have different implications for different genders, revealing unconscious biases embedded in language and societal perceptions.

Gender identity represents a deeply felt and experienced sense of one's gender, forming a part of each individual's overall identity. AFP

Patriarchy in workplace

"We often overlook that the patriarchy we address in the workplace is equally rampant at home. Workplaces mirror the society in which they exist," said Shreya Krishnan, Managing Director at AnitaB.ord India.

"To effect meaningful change, we must address mental, physical, emotional, and societal structures through comprehensive policies, advocacy, and systemic change," she added.

Gender is today recognized as a spectrum, encompassing over 26 identified genders globally. This understanding facilitates acceptance of diverse sexual orientations and backgrounds. Gender identity represents a deeply felt and experienced sense of one's gender, forming a part of each individual's overall identity.

Understanding history

"Tamil Nadu is the only state in India that has banned surgeries on intersex infants. Statistics show that one in every 1,000 children is born intersex, but many remain unaware because parents make decisions based on external genitalia, causing gender dysphoria later", said Mr. Suresh Ramdas, an LGBTQ spokesperson and the winner of Mr. Gay India 2019.

He pointed out how the AIDS crisis saw lesbians playing a pivotal role in support efforts, leading to the acronym LGBT (originally GLBT) to honour their contributions. Understanding this history and ensuring accurate representation is essential for fostering an inclusive dialogue, he noted.

While 'transition' is a word used commonly to denote the process of one discovering and/or affirming one's identity through processes that may include surgeries, changing names, pronouns and identification documents, a deeper introspection can show that this usage could be problematic, pointed out the speakers.

"'Transition' can be problematic as they imply a before-and-after state, whereas many trans individuals have always identified with their gender. The preferred term is 'affirmation', reflecting their consistent identity", said Madhvi Chandavarkar, Content Lead of OnPurpose

The speakers also highlighted the importance of representation in media and underscored the need to prioritise authentic storytelling by trans individuals themselves, using accurate and respectful language.

"Affirming gender identity and using language that respects their true identity without implying they were once something else, is crucial," said Ms. Krishnan.

As per the guidelines issued by the Press Council of India for covering news on members of the LGBTQ+ community, preferred terms for transgender individuals include "transgender person," "trans woman," or "trans man" rather than outdated terms like "transgenders" or "eunuchs." The term "gender-affirming surgery" is recommended over "sex-change surgery" to align with respect for individual identity.

Terms such as "homosexual" are generally avoided outside scientific or clinical contexts. Coverage should focus on a person's gender identity or sexual orientation only when directly relevant to the story. Visual elements accompanying LGBTQIA+ stories are advised to depict the varied and everyday lives of LGBTQIA+ individuals rather than relying on clichéd imagery like pride parades or rainbow flags, while ensuring consent and respecting privacy.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1974

'Karnataka's Wheat Mission to North Successful'

Bangalore, June 17: The Karnataka Food Minister Mr. K.H. Patil, said here today that the State's wheat purchase mission in the North, both on the Government account and private trade account, was a success. Mr. Patil, who had just returned from Chandigarh after discussions with the Punjab Chief Minister and Haryana Food Minister, told pressmen that about 95,000 tonnes of wheat was expected to flow into the State shortly from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and possibly UP. The State had asked for 50,000 tonnes of wheat from Punjab, 25,000 tonnes from Haryana, 10,000 tonnes from Rajasthan and 10,000 tonnes from UP. The Punjab Chief Minister had agreed to comply with the request and 15,000 tonnes would be moved immediately by 10 trains and the rest in the next two months.

Police Open Fire While Arresting Gang of Gamblers

Bangalore, June 17: Police had to open fire in the air once on Saturday night in a posh hotel in the High Grounds area, while arresting a group of alleged gamblers who tried to overpower them. It is stated that about 25 persons were gambling in one of the rooms of the hotel and the police broke open the door and entered the room at about 11-30 in the night. On seeing that the police party consisted of only four including the Deputy Commissioners of Police, Mr. T. Sreenivasalu and Mr. K. U. Some among the gamblers challenged them and attempted to escape. When some of them tried to overpower the police party, fire was opened in the air.

CITYBEATS

Just for chills

ONGOING
Naturals Ice Cream has launched the lychee ice cream as its summer special. The ice cream has been made by blending lychee, milk and sugar. For this special version, the makers say that they source the lychees from Muzzafarpur and Kolkata.
Available at Naturals Ice Cream outlets across the country.

Its classical!

JUNE 22
Kala Sindhu Academy will be presenting a dance ballet. Titled *Ekaa Dasha Rudra*, the presentation is a fusion of five different styles of dance – Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Mohiniyattam, Kuchipudi, Samudranatanam – featuring 50 dancers from across India.
At Chowdaiah Memorial Hall, at 6 pm. Tickets on BookMyShow.

Lunch combos

ONGOING
Kling brewery has introduced a new lunch combo. The menu will be available from Monday to Friday between noon and 3pm and offers you cuisine from North India, seafood from the coast, Thai cuisine, Asian or a lavish Continental fare. Kling is at #27, ground floor, Sattva Auro, Church Street.
Call 98802 28891 to book a table.

How Padmavati Rao embraces life through theatre and activism

Multifaceted in the true sense, Padmavati Rao approaches every character with humility and surrender to lend honesty to her craft

Charumathi Supraja

Down memory lane Padmavati Rao in different avatars. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

I'm starting with a disclaimer. It is impossible to map all the things that Padmavati Rao has done and continues to do. She has worked as an actor, writer, playwright, translator, puppeteer, story-teller, assistant director, dubbing director, dialogue writer, poet, artist, eco-activist, school teacher, theatre facilitator, farmer and even made a refrigerator (yes, you read that right) that can run without electricity.

Padmavati's work has – literally and metaphorically, spanned different locations in time, space and intent. Yet, speaking to her, you feel the gentleness of her strength, see a stubborn love for life (despite the pain that life can bring) and sense her childlike glee about her next creative foray.

When Padmavati Rao made her big screen debut in Girish Karnad's Kannada film *Ondanondu Kaladalli*, she was a 15-year-old school girl called Akshatha Rao from erstwhile Bombay. At 17, she became a popular actor after essaying the role of Geetha in a Kannada film of the same name.

Exasperated by the fame the film brought her, she cut her hair to encash the small joys of walking on MG Road in Bengaluru, "without being interrupted by fans."

To date, she is referred to as "Geetha film heroine." It makes her happy that "Geetha – the feisty girl in love with life, is remembered for what she was."

Even before that unexpected call from cinema and adulation, Padmavati was actively pursuing Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati theatre in Bombay, learning the ropes of acting and theatre-making with the likes of Balraj Sahni, AK Hangal and Shaukat Azmi (Shabana Azmi's mother) at the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA).

Her average day as a college student involved traversing across Bombay by bus, train and walk taking French classes before college, going for rehearsals and shows after college and getting home late in the night.

She fully credits her parents for the foundation she and her sister Arundhati Nag got, not just in theatre practice, but also in life. "We were encouraged to spread our wings and fly," says Padmavati.

There were ground rules though. The sisters had to inform their parents about who they would be with, where, roughly when they would get back and a phone contact (only landlines of course) had to be shared for emergencies.

Any mistakes or wrong choices only brought them closer to their parents. "And we made plenty of mistakes," recalls Padmavati.

The challenges and joys of working in those times taught her a lot. When an indefinite power cut loomed before the performance of *Khelaiyya*, a hugely popular Gujarati musical directed by Mahendra Joshi, the audience refused to take a refund and insisted that the play be performed, even if in candlelight. And so it was. "Candles were bought out from the area around Prithvi Theatre and the audience watched the whole play in candlelight, singing and clapping along!" Padmavati recalls.

Watching her play a grieving mother in *Apne Ghar Jaise* during the Remembering Veenapani Festival at Adishakti Theatre, Auroville, earlier this year, I saw how Padmavati held the audience in the grip of her character's doubts, sorrows, questions and prejudices though she was the only one on stage for most part.

Her process as an actor involves approaching every character with complete humility and surrender, she says. She lets the director, "who has been with the character for much longer," shape her performance completely.

Padmavati believes that playing characters unlike oneself opens tremendous growth avenues for the actor within, while also teaching empathy.

She advocates the power of "emptying out" before donning a role and stresses the importance of doing one's homework as an actor. She is said to have learnt to knit, skilfully and fast, to better play her role in the Hindi film 'Te3n,' alongside Amitabh Bachchan.

Speaking about her recent work as Deva in Prime Video's Tamil series, *Sweet Kaaram Coffee*, Padmavati expresses delight about getting to work with veteran actor Lakshmi, "who was a star, when I was in my teens."

Padmavati's work as an actor on stage, the big screen and small screen take away nothing from her passion to work with and for the earth through Sarsayee Foundation – a not-for-profit entity that she founded to train young people in engaging deeply and compassionately with ecology and the arts.

We need to "find the forest within and nurture the forest without," says Padmavati, who believes that the world can change only when we collectively transform from "human doings to human beings."

> The world can change only when we collectively transform from human doings to human beings.
>
> **PADMAVATI RAO**
> Actor, writer, playwright

Dark and deep A still from *Paruvu*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Paruvu and its stark beginings

Sangeetha Devi Dundoo

Siddharth Naidu and Rajashekhar Vadlapati, co-directors of the Telugu web series *Paruvu*, streaming on Zee5 from June 14, had hoped to make a splash in the digital space in 2017-18. Back then, web series were not a phenomenon in India, except for an occasional *Sacred Games*.

In Telugu, it was a new domain. "We had ideas for workplace comedies, romcoms, crime..." they recall. Siddharth had written seven scripts, keeping in mind the budgets feasible for digital platforms, but none of them were picked up. Though it has taken time, their first web series *Paruvu* is a significant one that explores socio-political dynamics in the Guntur-Vijayawada region of Andhra Pradesh.

Starring Nagababu, Naresh Agastya, Nivetha Pethuraj, Praneeta Patnaik and several others, the series dissects caste, class divisions and the struggle for survival.

At an interview for *The Hindu* in Hyderabad, Siddharth, the writer of the series, reveals that *Paruvu* (honour) stemmed from incidents of *paruvu hatyalu* (honour killings) that he and his friends had learnt of in Andhra Pradesh.

"In urban pockets, not many people are aware of this reality. This knowledge disparity was a trigger for me to write."

During the pandemic, Siddharth and Rajashekar were also shaken by director Vetrimaaran's hard-hitting Tamil short film *Oor Iravu* for the Netflix anthology *Paava Kadhaigal*, which explored honour killings.

Having collaborated earlier for their media company VoxSpace, the friends put all their energy into fleshing out a story revolving around honour and what it means to different people.

Since offline events had come to a standstill during the lockdowns, VoxSpace was paused.

A demo short film
Siddharth wrote a 10-page short story and pooling resources, the duo made a 30-minute film with an indie approach.

"This portion involves three characters and is mostly filmed in a car and a few scenes on a lonely street in the dark. We pulled it off," they say. Their plan was to upload the film on YouTube, but it seemed like a good demo film for a larger story.

The film was shot prior to the second wave of COVID-19. Soon after, Siddharth developed it into a 12-episode web series and the screenplay was approximately 750 pages. The co-directors have a blueprint for seasons two and three.

Siddharth hails from Vijayawada and grew up in Hyderabad, while Rajashekar has roots in Chittoor and grew up in Bengaluru.

Over the years, both had observed the clash of cultures when they visited their hometowns.

"I have seen how they try to put us down and we think they are stuck in social dynamics dictated by caste and class," Siddharth says.

They point out that what worked in favour of *Paruvu* is Zee5 reposing faith in the narrative for its potential to draw eyeballs in tier two and three cities. Writer-director Pavan Sadineni stepped in as the showrunner and helped debut directors Siddharth and Rajashekar plan the filming of the series and design a few sequences that required visual effects. Sushmita's eagerness to explore socio-political dynamics further encouraged the directors.

Added to this was the presence of veteran actor Nagababu (for those unfamiliar with Telugu cinema, he is Chiranjeevi's older brother).

Over 750 auditions
Considerable time was spent in pre-production and 750 candidates auditioned for the various characters. "We wanted people who looked unique and had distinct traits so that even if they appear in a few scenes, there is an instant recall," says Rajashekar. Except for 10-12 well-known actors from Telugu cinema, others were either novices or amateur actors who had worked in Telugu cinema or YouTube series.

An actor who surprised them was newcomer Siddha, who plays a mute character. He learnt ASL (American Sign Language) and also taught it to other characters who interact with him in the series.

The female characters are no pushovers and no character, big or small, is strictly black or white.

For Siddharth and Rajashekar, *Paruvu* is the first step. "We have plans and hope to execute them," says Siddharth.

Different shades of one

Beautiful Black And White, an ongoing exhibition at My Lily Pond, Indiranagar, takes visitors on an extraordinary journey of monochrome visions. The exhibition showcases around 50 works of art created by 25 established and emerging artists.

This first-ever monochrome art exhibition was conceptualised and curated by Bengaluru-based artist MG Doddamani, founder of Oorja Expressions, an organisation that promotes art and philanthropy.

"In today's digital world, you will find an abundance of colour pictures. Earlier, however, every photo was in black and white, and if you look at them now, they bring about a sense of nostalgia. That is why I decided to bring artists together to showcase the power of monochrome," said Doddamani.

Kanthimathy Jayachandran, founder of My Lily Pond, says her vision was to create a community for artists, art lovers, and collectors. Asked why she named her gallery Lily Pond, she said, "Just as a lily grows from a pond, art also grows from a human being," adding that the space has fostered an environment where art is experienced, appreciated and integrated into the lives of visitors, ever since its inception in 2019.

No matter if you're black or white Some of the exhibits currently at My Lily Pond. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Beautiful Black And White delves on themes of duality and harmony and some of the exhibiting artists include S G Vasudev, Krishna Setty, Vijay Hagaragundagi, PS Kumar, PB Harsoor and Doddamani himself.

The exhibition showcases works created using different media such as charcoal, graphite, acrylic and ink on paper, canvas and satin. Themes range from deities, nature, friendship, portraits and more, with prices of the paintings starting at ₹20,000.

At the inauguration of Beautiful Black And White, senior artists were felicitated for their achievements. Doddamani also gave an introduction to the unique techniques used by each artist as well as the importance of light and composition in the creative process.

He concluded with an appreciation for the simplicity and elegance of black-and-white art and its ability to convey profound ideas and emotions without the need for colour.

Beautiful Black And White is on at My Lily Pond, Indiranagar till June 21. Entry free.

From Page One

Consultations on providing menstrual leave under way

Multiple women members on the committee expressed happiness that a discussion on menstrual leave has been encouraged by the government in Karnataka and it helps destigmatising menstruation. Another member said that the scope of the menstrual leave could be extended to government sector too, especially teachers, police personnel, home guards, anganwadi, and ASHA workers.

"There have been discussions about both pros and cons of introducing menstrual leave. Those against it have maintained that it could lead to discrimination against women and restrict employment opportunities. Some are citing the possible opposition from the industries over financial implications as this would entail 12 days paid leave a year along with other leaves such as earned leave and casual leave, besides public holidays," a member on the committee said.

Suggestions have been that the leave could be made mandatory for employers to grant, but women could be allowed to choose whether to seek the facility or not, sources said. The menstrual leave, sources said, could come as a major benefit to over 4 lakh women in the garment sector in the State who get just 10 public holidays and a maximum of 15 earned leaves in a year.

Sources familiar with the development also said that though menstrual leave has been made mandatory in several countries, surveys in Japan and South Korea have shown that not all women in the workforce utilise it all the time. "In the Indian context, workers may not even approach the male supervisor for leave. In the South East Asian countries, the menstrual leave is essentially treated as 'protected parenthood' to prevent any possible impairment to reproductive capability" a source said.

Sources said that the menstrual leave could also prevent "presenteeism", where staff come to work but remain unproductive due to physical and emotional discomfort owing to menstruation.

Though Bihar, in 1992, was the earliest among the States to provide "biological leave" for two days per month to women government employees, including those on contract, and Kerala introduced menstrual leave for female students in universities in 2023, an attempt to introduce the Menstruation Benefits Bill, 2022, in Arunachal Pradesh Assembly by legislator Ninong Ering attracted angry reaction from other lawmakers, many of whom disparagingly called it an "unclean subject".

T.N. govt. must refuse talks on Mekedatu: Ramadoss

Mekedatu project had been conceived with the intention of depriving Tamil Nadu of its rightful share of Cauvery river water, says the PMK leader

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

S. Ramadoss

PMK founder S. Ramadoss on Monday criticised the suggestion made by Union Minister of State for Water Resources V. Somanna that the Centre and the governments of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry should engage in talks regarding the construction of a check-dam at Mekedatu.

He alleged that the Mekedatu project had been conceived with the intention of depriving Tamil Nadu of its rightful share of Cauvery water. In a statement, Dr. Ramadoss said that the Tamil Nadu government should refuse to take part in any talks called by the Union government, adding that the Union Minister should not be speaking in favour of Karnataka. "According to the final award of the Cauvery Water Management Authority and the Supreme Court verdict, the Mekedatu dam cannot be constructed without the consent of Tamil Nadu. It is clear that the rights of Tamil Nadu will be affected if the dam is built. Agreeing to such talks would essentially mean surrendering Tamil Nadu's rights," he said.

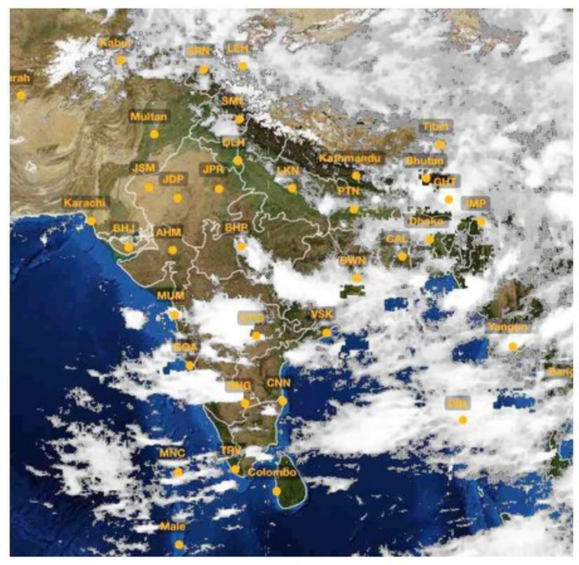
Meanwhile, AIADMK Workers' Rights' Retrieval Committee coordinator O. Panneerselvam urged the Chief Minister to impress upon his Karnataka counterpart the need to release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu in line with the verdict of the Supreme Court.

He urged the DMK government to make use of the "close relationship" between the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and the Congress party, and to exert "necessary pressure" for securing Cauvery water. The Congress is in power in Karnataka.

He underlined the impact of the Karnataka government's failure to release Cauvery water on the livelihood of farmers in Tamil Nadu.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Konkan & Goa, Kerala and Mahe. Heat/severe heat wave conditions likely in few/isolated parts of north Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	36	32.5	23.8	Kozhikode	—	34.4	26.3
Ahmedabad	—	40.6	30.1	Kurnool	—	36.8	26.3
Aizawl	0.3	29.5	24.0	Lucknow	—	46.0	31.6
Allahabad	—	47.6	34.7	Madurai	—	39.0	26.5
Bengaluru	2.1	30.8	21.5	Mangaluru	—	31.0	24.5
Bhopal	—	34.2	27.5	Mumbai	0.1	34.3	27.6
Bhubaneswar	—	41.0	28.9	Mysuru	16	32.0	—
Chandigarh	—	45.5	34.2	New Delhi	—	45.2	33.0
Chennai	—	37.7	27.8	Patna	—	41.4	28.8
Coimbatore	—	34.8	24.2	Port Blair	—	32.5	26.6
Dehradun	—	43.1	28.0	Puducherry	—	36.6	26.6
Gangtok	22	19.4	18.6	Pune	2	34.9	25.4
Goa	14	31.5	24.8	Raipur	—	38.5	29.5
Guwahati	70	28.2	24.1	Ranchi	—	39.5	26.2
Hubballi	—	30.0	23.0	Shillong	32	22.0	18.1
Hyderabad	0.1	35.9	26.1	Shimla	—	34.0	25.7
Imphal	2	25.2	17.1	Srinagar	—	33.4	15.9
Jaipur	—	43.4	33.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.4	26.5
Kochi	6	31.4	26.0	Tiruchi	—	38.3	27.4
Kohima	4	23.4	16.0	Vijayawada	28	39.2	25.6
Kolkata	—	37.7	29.8	Visakhapatnam	1	34.7	28.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.25	..76	.14	...181	...147	
Bengaluru	.14	.23	.81	39	50	
Chennai	...6	7	102	62	55	
Delhi	.19	112	.46	...287	...263	
Hyderabad	.10	8	.29	64	77	
Kolkata	...6	.25	.18	38	92	
Lucknow	.12	..49	.54	...219	...165	
Mumbai	...1	266	.17	16	33	
Pune	..—	..30	.95	42	52	
Visakhapatnam	..—	..—	.20	.....—	.....—	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Dhanbad, Jharkhand recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 356 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Yadgir, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 22

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

EPS criticises Central govt.'s choice of Jal Shakti Minister

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Edappadi K. Palaniswami

AIADMK general secretary and Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Monday criticised the Central government over the appointment of V. Somanna from Karnataka as the Jal Shakti Minister, saying it was a "huge betrayal" of Tamil Nadu.

In a social media post, Mr. Palaniswami said that the Central government was supposed to be unbiased when it came to the disputes between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, but it had named Mr. Somanna as the Union Minister for Jal Shakti.

Ban on SIMI: Tribunal to hold sitting in Nilgiris on June 18, 19

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal will hold a sitting in Coonoor on June 18 and 19 to hear the public's views on the Centre's notification declaring the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) an unlawful association. The tribunal, presided over by Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav, of the Delhi High Court, will hold the sitting at the Municipal Council Hall from 10 a.m. Those interested in giving evidence to the tribunal may file their affidavits with Jitendra Pratap Singh, Registrar, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, Delhi High Court.

They should be present before the tribunal on the two days. The evidence can be sent to the email ID dhc.registrartribunal@gmail.com, or to the Office of the Registrar, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, Chamber No.15, Ground Floor, Block 'A', Delhi High Court, New Delhi -110503.

Woman hurt as buffalo drags her along road

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A 35-year-old woman was injured when she was dragged along the road by a charging buffalo, after her dress got caught in its horns at Tiruvottiyur in Chennai on Sunday.

The police identified the victim as Madhumathi. On Sunday afternoon, when she was walking on a narrow lane, her dress got caught in the horns of the buffalo that came charging in the opposite direction. She was dragged along for a few yards. Upon hearing her cries, neighbours rescued her and rushed her to a hospital.

Sunny side up

Speed thrills: Visitors enjoying a speed boat ride off the Rushikonda beach in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, on Monday. V. RAJU

Govt. sanction must to prosecute police personnel for 'illegal acts' on duty: HC

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Case relates to acquittal of 4 police officers accused of taking a man into custody illegally

The Kerala High Court has held that sanction of the government under Section 197 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) is required to prosecute police personnel for any alleged illegal act done as part of their official duty.

The court made the observation recently while dismissing an appeal by Joji Joseph challenging the Kottayam Additional Sessions Court's order acquitting four police officers in a 1996 case registered against them on charge of taking him illegally into custody and manhandling him. He had been taken into custody and a case filed against him under Section 51A of the Kerala Police Act for allegedly being drunk and behaving in a disorderly manner on a road.

The court observed that even in a case where a person is taken into custody as part of duty and in accordance with law, the police have no authority to manhandle or detain him illegally. If manhandled or detained illegally, the erring policemen are liable for prosecution. That does not mean that if such an act is done as part of official duty, no sanction is required to prosecute them.

The court added that every offence committed by the police does not require sanction if such an act is entirely outside the scope of his duty. If the alleged act, however illegal it may be, was reasonably connected or has a reasonable nexus to the discharge of his official duty, then sanction is required for prosecution under Section 197.

Elders are financially not secure: Report

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Nearly 65% of elders are financially insecure with their current income and access to savings and investments, according to the HelpAge India report, 'Ageing in India: Exploring Preparedness & Response to Care Challenges', which was released recently to commemorate 'World Elder Abuse Awareness Day' on June 15.

According to the report, high illiteracy levels further aggravated the situation, with around 40% of the elderly who are illiterate reporting not having access to any income sources in comparison to 29% of literate respondents. The study was conducted across 20 tier I and tier II cities in 10 states, and a total of 5,169 elders and 1,333 caregivers were surveyed.

The report reveals that a majority of India's elders are not prepared for their later years, with high dependency on others for a dignified living.

The financial insufficiency amongst elders showed in how one in every three elders did not have any income in the past year, more amongst women (38%) than men (27%). 32 % elderly or their spouses have an annual income of less than ₹50,000, and only 29% reported having access to social security schemes like old-age pension/contributory pension/provident fund.

Only around 15% of elderly persons reported currently working, with 24% elderly males and only 7% elderly females reporting work participation. The work participation of older people varied marginally with their place of residence, tier I cities (17%) and tier II cities (14%).

A small proportion of older people (29%) reported having access to social security schemes like old-age pension/contributory pension/provident fund.

As many as 35% of older people from the SEC B categories reported having pensions, compared to 20% of the elderly from the Socio-Economic Category.

On the health front, more than half of older people (52%) reported facing at least one challenge related to primary or instrumental activities of daily living.

Most of the elderly persons (79%) visited government hospitals/clinics/PHCs in the last year. Almost half (47%) of the super senior citizens that is, those above 80 years, who visited these government hospitals/clinics had no personal income.

One in three elderly people reported no income in the past year. Around 31% of those in the 60-69 age group, 36% of those in the 71-79 age group, and 37% of those 80 years and above reported 'No income' in the past year.

"The report highlights the lack of age preparedness, especially among the 'missing middle', who don't fall under most government schemes and have meagre savings for their later years. The ecosystem is not adequately developed to look after their needs in terms of care, health, financial and digital inclusion," said Anupama Datta, Head-Policy Research & Advocacy, HelpAge India.

Jagan's unmindful decisions delayed Polavaram irrigation project: Naidu

G.V.R. Subba Rao
POLAVARAM

On his first visit to the Polavaram irrigation project site after assuming office, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday expressed doubts about completion of the project in the near future.

The under-construction project over the Godavari has been plagued by delays and damage.

"Officials say a minimum of four seasons (years) are required to complete the project, but it all depends on ifs and buts. We need to ascertain the situation," he said.

The Chief Minister inspected the diaphragm wall, which was damaged in August 2020, coffer dam and other areas on the site on Monday.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu inspecting the Polavaram project site on Monday. K.V.S. GIRI

He took stock of the situation during a meeting with the officials.

Later, addressing a press conference, Mr. Naidu said the diaphragm wall was damaged at four places. Repairing these alone would cost ₹447 crore. A new diaphragm wall, on the other hand, would cost ₹990 crore.

"All these losses and delay in the completion of the project is solely because of one person, who is unfit to be in politics," he said, referring to former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

"His [Mr. Reddy's] unmindful decisions pushed the project to this state. The fate of the project hangs in balance due to his blunders."

Mr. Naidu said about 70% of the project was completed during the TDP regime between 2014 and 2019. The YSRCP government not only failed to complete the work but also kept the project in limbo. Had the works not been suspended for over a year on account of reverse tendering, change of contactor, etc, the project would have been completed by now, he said.

Trade trapeze

Goods exports rebound needs nurturing to plug gap with imports

After a rough 2023-24, when India's merchandise exports tanked 3.1% to around $437 billion, trade tides appear to be turning. The last two months have recorded an expansion in outbound shipments with the momentum picking up from a 1.1% rise in April to a 9.1% uptick in May. Some of this reversal had begun in the January to March quarter, when exports grew 4.9% to a seven-quarter high of over $120 billion, belying worries about the disruptions in the Red Sea route since late 2023. Imports as well as exports have risen in four of the last five months now. With the European Central Bank slashing interest rates this month after a long hawkish stance post-COVID-19, exporters and trade officials are hopeful that its peers in key markets would follow suit and help shore up demand for their produce. But with prices of some industrial commodities such as metals as well as food items rising in recent months, those hopes need to be tempered. The U.S. Federal Reserve has scaled back expectations, stating that only one rate cut is likely through this calendar year.

It is heartening that 20 of India's top 30 export items have outperformed last May's export tallies this year, compared with just 13 items recording a rise in April. The sectors that recovered in May include employment-intensive ones such as apparel, man-made yarn, and engineering goods. Worryingly, spice shipments slipped by a sharp 20.3%, while marine products tanked again. Spices and shrimp exports were likely hit by some negative reports in key markets about quality and workplace standards, respectively, and more must be done to counter what has been termed a misplaced narrative. On the other hand, May's import bill hit a seven-month high of $61.9 billion, widening the trade deficit to $23.8 billion, 25% over April's gap. A record $13.2 billion deficit in petroleum products fuelled this gap, with imports worth $20 billion mostly linked to April's average oil price of $89 a barrel. Oil prices have eased since then, but warrant close monitoring in an import-dependent country. Officials have downplayed concerns about rising deficits, arguing that import demand will outstrip demand for India's exports, as it is growing faster than the world. Moreover, rising services exports and forex inflows from global investments shall help offset the gap, along with import substitution efforts. The latter assumption could prove tricky – foreign direct investment inflows have declined for three years, earnings guidance from IT services' majors has been far from optimistic, and private investments to substitute imports remain sluggish. Rather than banking on intangibles and imponderables, the Centre must revitalise its schemes and efforts to prop up goods exports, with enhanced budgetary outlays to boot.

Negotiating for peace

India's decision to attend but not vote at the Swiss conference was right

The two-day "Summit on Peace", that ended on Sunday in Burgenstock, met with mixed outcomes. Switzerland was able to bring together more than 90 countries, at least 56 were represented by leaders, and the final joint communiqué was signed by about 82 countries and organisations, with the exception of a few including India. The document made a strong call for an end to the "ongoing war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine" and a pitch for sovereignty, territorial integrity and adherence to international law. It cited three areas of broad understanding: nuclear safety, food security and the exchange of all prisoners of war, displaced and detained Ukrainians. The statement was not very ambitious in its scope, as the organisers were keen to bring as many countries, particularly from the 'Global South' on board – which they managed to do to some extent. However, despite all these areas where Ukrainian President Zelenskyy hailed a "historic victory", there were shortcomings. Switzerland's decision not to invite Russia, and to build their negotiations on the basis of the Ukraine Peace Formula along with UN resolutions, made the event appear one-sided. The failure in convincing China, which arguably holds the most sway over Moscow, to even send a delegation was another blow. That no BRICS member, current and future, signed on to the statement indicates that it was a non-starter among the emerging economies.

Switzerland, Ukraine and other western countries had made a special attempt to win India's favour for the conference, including a last minute appeal by Mr. Zelenskyy when he met PM Modi at the G-7 outreach summit in Italy. As a close partner of Russia, a key Global South player, and a country that has kept a balance in the conflict, India's presence would have been a major win for the organisers. However, while New Delhi sent the NSA and Deputy NSA to two preparatory conferences in Jeddah and Davos, the Indian delegation here was led by the Secretary (West) in the External Affairs Ministry. India has consistently abstained from every resolution at the UN, Security Council, IAEA, Human Rights Council and other multilateral fora that seeks to criticise Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. While India may share concerns over much of the text released at the conference, it could not have gone ahead with its overtly anti-Russian slant. In its presence, however, New Delhi showed that it is willing to be part of the process, especially if it leads to a more inclusive future conference, with Russia and Ukraine at the table. As a result, India's decision to attend the conference, but not endorse its outcome, was probably a foregone conclusion.

Constitutional respect should not be reduced to optics

Dushyant Dave

is a Senior Advocate and a former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association

Prime Minister Narendra Modi never stops surprising the nation with optics. On June 7, 2024, at the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance meeting of newly elected Members of Parliament, Mr. Modi, upon his arrival, paid his respects to the Constitution of India by touching the book to his forehead. Interestingly, the setting of the meeting was the Samvidhan Sadan of the newly built Parliament.

But does Mr. Modi respect the Constitution of India in letter and spirit? His actions so far as the Prime Minister since 2014, or for that matter as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, show otherwise.

In a parliamentary democracy, the Prime Minister is only the head of the Council of Ministers. Article 74 of the Constitution mandates: "There shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall, in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice."

Pitching for 'responsibility'

B.R. Ambedkar and his fellow framers wisely chose the parliamentary system over the presidential system because "Looking at it from the point of view of responsibility, a non-Parliamentary Executive being independent of Parliament tends to be less responsible to the Legislature, while a Parliamentary Executive being more dependent upon a majority in Parliament become more responsible." It was hoped that the assessment of responsibility of the executive is both daily and periodic; the daily assessment is done by Members of Parliament in the form of questions, resolutions, no-confidence motions, adjournment motions and debates on addresses. Periodic assessment is done by the electorate every five years. Thus, the framers preferred "more responsibility to more stability".

On June 9, 2024, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Ministers were administered the oath of office and secrecy by the President of India. But it was only after the first cabinet meeting on the evening of June 10 that the portfolios of Ministers were announced. Yet, on the same day, the Prime Minister cleared the file that sanctioned the release of the seventeenth instalment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, the farmers' welfare scheme, for ₹20,000 crore. Could the Prime Minister at all have done so? And was it within his purview under the Rules of Business? Such a scheme will be under the Ministry of Agriculture with its working regulated by the Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure.

So, why would the Prime Minister take pre-emptive and perhaps unauthorised action? It is optics.

> B.R. Ambedkar seems to have predicted today's complete political disregard for constitutional morality

The first cabinet, which met without the allocation of portfolios, also took the decision "to provide assistance to three crore additional rural and urban households for the Construction of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana". Could this at all have been done by a cabinet sans portfolios? Which was the Ministry that had initiated the proposal? Was the agenda circulated? Were Ministers aware of the details? Why this hurry? Optics.

Yet again, without reconstituting the Cabinet Committee after the formation of the new government, the Prime Minister extended the tenures of the National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, and P.K. Mishra as the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. This was done under the garb of the old "Appointments Committee of the Cabinet", which, incidentally, comprises the Prime Minister and the Home Minister.

On constitutional morality

So, what happens to coalition dharma?

These events show a complete disregard for the Constitution by the Prime Minister. Regrettably, not one Minister or bureaucrat who is bound by constitutional details and controls raised any objections. Why?

B.R. Ambedkar was aware of these problems. On November 4, 1948, before the Constituent Assembly, he said that "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic."

So how did this Great Son of India predict today's Modi? Because, to him, constitutional morality meant "a paramount reverence for the forms of the Constitution" and those forms of the Constitution must be sacred in the eyes of both those who are in power and his opponents. To ensure this, the framers provided administrative details in the Constitution of India.

Article 77, thereupon, provides that "The President shall make rules for the more convenient transaction of the business of the Government of India, and for the allocation among Ministers of the said business".

In recent times, the functioning of the Government of India shows a complete negation of the cabinet system and collective responsibility to the President and Parliament. There is an extraordinary amassing of power in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) which is destroying the constitutional basis of "more responsibility".

Pertinently, the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, as they stand today, allocate only business to the PMO – "To provide Secretarial Assistance to the PM". On the contrary, they provide that "The business of the Government of India shall be transacted in the Ministries, Departments, Secretariats and Offices specified in the First Schedule to these Rules". Also, the distribution of subjects is provided in the Second Schedule. Even the Cabinet Secretariat is only to provide "Secretarial assistance to the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees" and enforce the "Rules of Business".

So, why is there a complete breakdown of the constitutional framework and ethos? Bhakti.

The advent of constitutional dictatorship

B.R. Ambedkar did warn that Bhakti in life is good for the salvation of the soul. But in politics, it is the sure path to dictatorship. What we are witnessing is constitutional dictatorship, something that the framers were strongly against.

Manipur has been burning for over a year. Yet the Prime Minister has not found the time to visit the State much less resolve the existential threat to the State. Had there been an Opposition government in power in Manipur, President's Rule would have been foisted on the State under Article 356 long back. Does the Prime Minister show any urgency to solve serious challenges such as poverty, ever increasing unemployment, inflation (actual) or even resolving the Kashmir situation? No. Why? These are thorny issues and do not provide instant optics.

The Prime Minister's campaign in the recently concluded general election is living proof of a complete disregard for constitutional morality. While on the campaign trail, he repeatedly attacked the largest minority community in the country, forgetting that secularism runs through the foundation of the Constitution. He belittled the Opposition in every speech forgetting that under our democracy, the Opposition has a place of honour. Yet, not one institution or its guardian stood up to remind him, much less stop him. The Prime Minister, as election laws stand today, is liable to be disqualified from Parliament. But who has courage in a nation where there is fear stalking in every nook and corner? So much for democracy.

So, will the government's coalition partners and the newly rejuvenated Opposition remind the Prime Minister of the need to adhere to constitutional morality? So far, they have failed us: the people, for whom the Constitution created the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Let us wait in hope.

The last continent must remain a pristine wilderness

K.M. Seethi

is Director, Inter University Centre for Social Science Research and Extension (IUCSSRE), Mahatma Gandhi University, and Academic Advisor to the International Centre for Polar Studies (ICPS), Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala

The 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM-46), that was held in Kochi, Kerala last month, highlighted the ongoing debate on Antarctic tourism. While the meeting sought to bring in a regulatory framework, it ultimately fell short of a definitive solution. This reflects the complex challenges of managing tourism in a region governed by international consensus and where the environment is rapidly changing.

Since the early 1990s, Antarctic tourism has witnessed a dramatic surge in tourist numbers, which have exploded from a few thousand to over 1,00,000 in the 2022-23 season. The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) estimates a figure of 1,18,089 tourists in 2023-2024. The United States and China account for more than 40% of tourists to the Antarctic. This growth is attributed to increased global interest in adventure travel and a desire to experience Antarctica's unique landscapes and wildlife. Tourists typically embark on multi-day expeditions on small to medium-sized ships, with some opting for larger cruises or fly-sail operations. Activities range from wildlife observation and photography to mountain climbing and skiing.

Antarctic tourism offers educational and economic benefits but also raises significant environmental concerns. Increased human presence disrupts wildlife, damages fragile ecosystems, and risks introducing invasive species. Ship traffic pollutes pristine waters, and tourism adds to the global carbon footprint. Climate change exacerbates these issues by opening new areas for tourism while increasing ecosystem vulnerability. The balance between scientific research, responsible tourism, and environmental protection is under intense pressure.

Gaps in the regulatory framework

The current governance framework for Antarctic tourism is fragmented and lacks clear regulations. The Antarctic Treaty, that came into force in 1961, prioritises peaceful use and scientific research. While the Madrid Protocol offers broad environmental guidelines, it lacks specific tourism regulations. The responsibility for day-to-day management falls largely on the IAATO, a self-regulatory industry body. Many believe IAATO's guidelines are inadequate to address the growing environmental pressures.

> Prioritising science-based decision-making will enable a sustainable future for Antarctic tourism

The ATCM is the primary platform for international cooperation on Antarctic issues. Despite recognising the need for a comprehensive tourism regulatory framework, the ATCM-46 failed to reach a consensus. Unanimous agreement from all consultative parties is required for decisions, often slowing action and allowing national interests to impede progress. While some countries push for strong regulations, others prioritise economic benefits or interpret Antarctic principles differently. The current geopolitical climate further complicates international cooperation on Antarctic governance.

Despite the limitations, the ATCM-46 made some progress. The meeting focused on developing a "comprehensive, flexible, and dynamic" framework for regulating tourism and non-governmental activities. A newly established working group will lead this effort over the next year. This signifies a renewed commitment to address the challenges of the Antarctic. Antarctica needs stronger measures to mitigate tourism impacts, as there are gaps in the current governance frameworks. The Antarctic Treaty System and the Madrid Protocol offer broad guidelines, but daily management relies heavily on self-regulation by IAATO, which many believe is inadequate for protecting wildlife and ecosystems.

A historical perspective on the evolution of discussions around tourism regulation is also valuable. Discussions on tourism regulation have been a point of debate at ATCM meetings since the 1960s. A proposed tourism annex introduced in 1991 failed to gain consensus, leading to the current reliance on IAATO's self-regulation. Since a 2004 expert meeting on tourism, discussions have grown more frequent, with concerns encompassing environmental impacts, disruption of research programmes, and safety issues. However, the ATCM's fragmented approach has led to non-binding guidelines rather than comprehensive regulation.

The limitations of the consensus rule are a recurring theme. The requirement for unanimous approval from all consultative parties has often hindered action. Proposals such as banning permanent tourism facilities have failed due to a lack of consensus, with objections emerging from conflicts with domestic laws, sovereignty issues, and differing views on Antarctic principles.

Understanding the true reasons for objections and finding flexible compromises are essential. The consensus rule's limitations mean activities are permitted if they comply with the Antarctic Treaty and Protocol, leading to "decision making by non-decision making". This essentially allows unregulated activities to continue in the absence of a clear framework.

India's line

At the ATCM 44 (2022), concerns about tourism's impact on Antarctic research, conservation, and the environment were raised. The importance of monitoring the impacts of tourism was emphasised, and India was emphatic on addressing tourism issues. Resolution 5 (2022) advised against building tourism-related structures with significant environmental impacts. Calls for a comprehensive debate on Antarctic tourism continued between ATCM 44 and ATCM 45, with a 2023 workshop highlighting the need for governance action. Despite the lack of international consensus, India enacted its own Antarctic Law in 2022.

Finding a sustainable future for Antarctic tourism requires a multi-pronged approach. Strengthening environmental protection, implementing robust monitoring programmes, and fostering international cooperation are crucial. The recent efforts at ATCM-46 offer a glimmer of hope. By prioritising science-based decision-making and having engagement with all stakeholders, we can ensure that Antarctica remains a pristine wilderness for generations to come, while also recognising the potential benefits of responsible tourism.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rail accident

There seems to be no end to railway accidents in India. The 'over indulgence' of the top leader in the affairs of the Ministry of Railways has made the Minister of Railways a non-entity. In the frenzy to flag off Vande Bharat trains across India, the Minister has become a hapless spectator. The Kavach warning system to save rail passengers is in focus again. One hopes that heads will roll.

C. Sachidananda Narayanan,
Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu

Over the past few years, the Indian Railways has been dealing with serious challenges: signal failures, maintenance issues and gross negligence in various departments. The Centre seems to be laying stress on modernisation but the perception is that there is hardly any improvement in passenger safety.

There is a fear of accidents and passengers need to be assured that all is well with the system.

Routine statements that severe action will be taken after an investigation seem to ring hollow.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar,
Bagrakote, West Bengal

Accidents of this nature will erode the confidence of passengers. With plans to have high-speed trains, the railways should ensure the efficacy of track management. This is not the time to play politics over the tragedies.

Front-line staff need to undergo intense medical screening.

G. Ramasubramanyam,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Despite the 'implementation' of numerous safety measures, a train journey in India is still unsafe. Passengers are being charged more but there hardly seems to be any obligation on the part of the Indian Railways to ensure a safe journey.

As a routine, an inquiry will take place and suggestions will emerge. But will the system ever improve?

V.S.K. Pillai,
Changanacherry, Kerala

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

The vulnerabilities of India's elderly

S. Irudaya Rajan
is Chair at the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD), Kerala

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is Honorary Visiting Professor at the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD), Kerala

The ageing phenomenon is the most notable experience of this century with remarkable improvement in human longevity complemented by the lowest levels of reproduction. While its magnitude and multiplication may appear threatening, there are attempts at redefining this domain not merely in terms of age but other related functioning conditioned by the evolving expansion in longevity on one hand and evolving scenario of vulnerabilities on the other.

In Indian conditions, in particular, the four vulnerabilities of later ages in life course are in terms of restrictions in activities of daily living, multi-morbidity, poverty and absence of any income. On these counts, the Longitudinal Ageing Survey of India (LASI, 2017-18) reports that about 20% of the elderly population experience each of these vulnerabilities. The remedy requires a multi-pronged approach involving the principles of inclusion and adoption of social security measures. Viewing these vulnerabilities as a life course phenomenon, promotion of life preparatory measures has to be put in place; this need not be limited to financial or economic independence per se but also means to ensure healthy active and productive years. Most attempts at evaluation of the ageing phenomenon have maintained an individual focus, wherein the attributes and characteristics of the aged are counted more than circumstances and conditioning of later life.

The rising count of the elderly need not be seen in isolation as the population transition is occurring along with a familial transition. The familial transition needs to be read in consideration of the household compositions and the accommodation pattern of the elderly within them. While there are households without elderly and households with multiple elderly, there are frequent instances of elderly living with elderly within the household. Not only is this living arrangement becoming more and more frequent but there are other features of dependence, care provisioning as well as social security and financial protection assuming prominence in households with elderly compared with those without them. This points to a persistence of vulnerabilities stated above in individual elderly arising simply out of the household features more than individual characteristics.

Contrasting today's elderly with tomorrow's, there is every possibility of characteristic advantage in terms of education, life preparation and economic dependence but adversities in health and quality of living owing to rising longevity and emergence of long-term chronic ailments. In this context, the slogan of healthy ageing need not focus on the elderly population but the prospective elderly to a large extent. Limitations as regards activities of daily living (ADL) do show a worsening trend over age even among the elderly population but one wonders as to whether that pattern will be moderated down among the future elderly and be postponed to much later ages of life.

The projected magnitude of the elderly population is estimated at 319 million by mid-century, growing by around 3% a year. This group will be feminine with a sex ratio of 1,065 females per thousand males; further, 54% of elderly women will be widows. While 6% of the elderly men live alone against 9% of their female counterparts, 70% of them are to be found in rural areas. These statistics can be of great use in terms of targeting welfare measures for this population.

The most disturbing feature relates to the health status that is reported to be poor by a quarter of the elderly as against about 20% among the population aged 45 and above. While 75% of the elderly population are victims of one or more chronic diseases, 40% of those aged 45 and above have one or the other disability. With the advent of the global burden of disease, it is apparent that the two threatening forces are diabetes and cancer which appear to be frequent among India's elderly.

Also, the emerging concern relates to mental health with 20% of those aged above 45 self-reporting some ailment, primarily associated with depression; this is reasonably higher compared with the self-reported extent among the elderly.

There also appears to be food insecurity among India's elderly where 6% of those above 45 years of age ate smaller portions or skipped meals and 5.3% of them did not eat despite being hungry. This phenomenon may look minimal but has its bearing on nutrition and consequential morbidities.

Recognising these adversities, protection measures are in place in terms of welfare provisioning, legal recourse as well as concessional measures for this group of population. However, there is very little awareness regarding the welfare provisioning. Hardly 12% are aware of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and 28% are aware of various concessions offered to the elderly.

On the whole, there are few expectations from life among India's elderly and their vulnerabilities make them victims of varied forms of abuse in the hands of family, community and society at large. While 5% of them report abuse, they are quite frequent, particularly for women in rural areas where they remain the most neglected. A movement towards creating social agency for this vulnerable group is the need of the hour. Innovative forms of institutions can be brought in place to alter their valuation from liability to an asset. There needs to be a focus on ensuring an active life course for the future elderly.

From social and financial independence to ensuring an active life course, we need to focus on preparatory measures for India's ageing population

Arrival of Azad in Kanshi Ram's land

The new Dalit leader's victory signals a shift in Uttar Pradesh's politics

STATE OF PLAY

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Chandrashekhar Azad's emergence as the new Dalit leader in Uttar Pradesh, following his resounding victory in Nagina in the just-concluded elections, could be a death knell for Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party, which once again failed to win a single seat in the State. While Mr. Azad garnered over 51% of votes, BSP's Surendra Pal Singh barely topped 1%. The passing of the baton could not have been louder or clearer.

It reminded many of the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests in December 2019. Back then, most political leaders, including Ms. Mayawati, were shy of being seen with the protestors. Not so Mr. Azad. Barely a couple of days after Imam Ahmed Bukhari of Delhi's historic Jama Masjid had voiced support for the CAA, arguing it did not affect Indian Muslims, Mr. Azad showed up around the time of the Friday prayers at the mosque. There on the steps of the mosque, he gave an impassioned call, and thousands of Muslims turned their back on the cleric and rallied behind him. It presented one of the most abiding images of the anti-CAA struggle. Mr. Azad had arrived. Or so thought many who witnessed the huge support he received. Two years later, *Time* magazine featured him among the 100 Emerging Leaders.

Mr. Azad though had to wait for his moment for over four years. In between, there were cases registered against him, including detention by Delhi Police for the Jama Masjid event for which police permission had been denied. Soon after the CAA stir, he founded the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram), and this June became the party's first Parliamentarian. His victory, while being heartwarming for Mr. Azad, could prove crucial in the days to come for politics in Uttar Pradesh. In the run-up to the general elections, representatives of the Samajwadi Party had met with Mr. Azad, hoping to bring him into the INDIA bloc. The meetings did not bear the desired results.

Meanwhile, Mr. Azad – while maintaining a public posture of respect for Ms. Mayawati – proved to be a good student of Kanshi Ram's book of politics. He realised the importance of being the voice of the Dalit community. Equally importantly, he realised its electoral limitations too. If he harboured any dreams of making a mark at the State or national level, he would have to bring together Dalits and Muslims. It was this perspicacity that drew him to Delhi's Jama Masjid in 2019. It was the same ability to look into the future that drew him to Nagina, a constituency with a 20% Dalit and 40% Muslim population.

With both Dalits and Muslims behind him, Mr. Azad's blueprint was ready. The masses propelled him to victory while consigning the BSP candidate to the fourth spot. SP's Manoj Kumar had to be content with the third place and around 10% votes. The results showed just why the Samajwadi may have cause for concern despite its great comeback in the 18th Lok Sabha election. Historically, the party has been dependent on the support of Muslims and Yadavs for success. This time, it added to the mix other OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits. The new confluence worked everywhere except Nagina. Mr. Azad's bid to bring Dalits and Muslims on the same page could provide the kind of challenge Ms. Mayawati, and before her, Kanshi Ram presented.

With Nagina, Mr. Azad has announced the arrival of a new Dalit leader to take forward the legacy of Kanshi Ram. It could well mark the end of the Mayawati saga in the State. For more than 40 years, the BSP was seen as the Dalit representative. Ms. Mayawati built the party on the support of the Dalit community but was smart enough to bring Muslims into the fold, followed briefly by Brahmins as she stitched a rainbow coalition ahead of the 2007 elections in the State.

The success in 2007 fuelled hope and ambition. Whispers started about the possibility of Ms. Mayawati rising higher in political echelons. The lady once quipped, "I dream of becoming the Prime Minister, not President." She spoke too soon. As her juggernaut ground to a halt in Uttar Pradesh, first by the Samajwadi Party in 2012, then the BJP for two consecutive terms under Yogi Adityanath, the BSP's fortunes sank abysmally. From 206 legislators in 2007 to merely 19 in 2017 and a solitary MLA in 2022, it was a steep fall. Add to that zero MPs in 2024. Even as Ms. Mayawati gropes for reasons for her defeat, Mr. Azad seems poised for a long flight.

MPs 27 times wealthier than an average urban household

Over 75% of the elected Members of Parliament in 2024 declared assets worth ₹3 crore or more

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan
Sambavi Parthasarathy

The 2024 general elections might have substantially changed the composition of the Lok Sabha in terms of party strengths, leading to a coalition government. However, candidates who thrived - even in the 2019 elections - were inevitably rich across most parties with assets equivalent to that of the top 10% of the urban households of the country.

The median asset value of winning candidates in the 2024 elections was ₹7.4 crore and close to 92% of the winners had assets of ₹1 crore or more, while 75% of them had assets of ₹3 crore or more. The median asset value of runner-up candidates in 2024 was ₹6.25 crore, with close to 88% of them having assets worth ₹1 crore or more, and 68% with assets worth ₹3 crore or more.

The numbers were similar in 2019. The median asset of a winning candidate was ₹4.8 crores, with close to 95% of the winners having assets of ₹1 crore or more, and 88% of them worth assets of ₹3 crore or more.

The median asset value of the candidates who were runners-up in the 2019 elections was ₹5.4 crore with close to 85% of them having assets worth ₹1 crore or more, and 63% had assets worth ₹3 crore or more **(Chart 1)**.

That candidates who were winners or runners-up had assets worth more than ₹1 crore was possibly due to parties fielding only rich candidates. The median assets of candidates of the top 27 parties each in 2024 was at least ₹1 crore. For the two major national parties, the BJP and the Congress, the values were ₹7.6 crore and ₹5.4 crore respectively **(Chart 2)**.

We use "median values" to filter out outliers; if we used "averages", the outliers – extremely rich candidates' wealth – would skew calculations. For example, Union Minister Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani of the Telugu Desam Party has declared assets worth ₹5,706 crore. If averages, instead of median values of assets of winners in 2024 were taken into account, the figure would shoot up to ₹46 crore, in comparison to a median of ₹7.4 crore.

That candidates are constituted from the elite segments of Indian society, in terms of wealth, is substantiated by a comparison of their assets with that of Indian households.

Significant gap

The All India Debt & Investment Survey- 2019 estimated that the average value of assets in an urban household was ₹27.1 lakh and the corresponding figure for a rural household was ₹15.9 lakh. These are "averaged" out numbers, meaning they could have been calculated as high because of rich outliers. Even then, the median assets of a winning candidate in 2024 was 27 times more than the average asset of an urban household, and that for a runner-up candidate was 23.1 times more.

These numbers (depicted in **Chart 3**) suggest that only someone from the elite, in terms of wealth, can meaningfully contest general elections in India which reflects, to a large extent, the cost of election campaigning and financing.

However, there were exceptions: Jyotirmay Singh Mahato (of the BJP) who won from Purulia in West Bengal had assets worth ₹5.95 lakh, Mitali Bag (of the Trinamool Congress) from Arambag - ₹7.8 lakh and Priya Saroj (of the Samajwadi Party) from Machchilishahar in Uttar Pradesh - ₹11.25 lakh.

In terms of parties, the Bahujan Samaj Party (₹47 lakh), the Peoples Democratic Party (₹87 lakh) and the CPI(M) (₹1 crore) fielded candidates with the lowest median assets. Only the CPI(M) among them had winning candidates (four).

Rising wealth of politicians

The data were sourced from affidavits, the Association for Democratic Reforms and the All India Debt & Investment Survey

Chart 1: The chart shows the median assets of winners and runners-up in 2019 and 2024

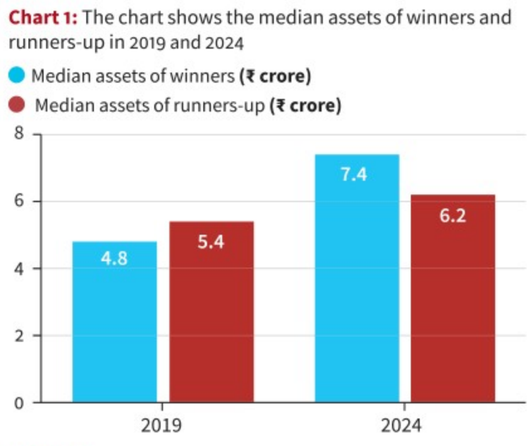


Chart 2: The chart shows the median assets of candidates of the major parties in 2024

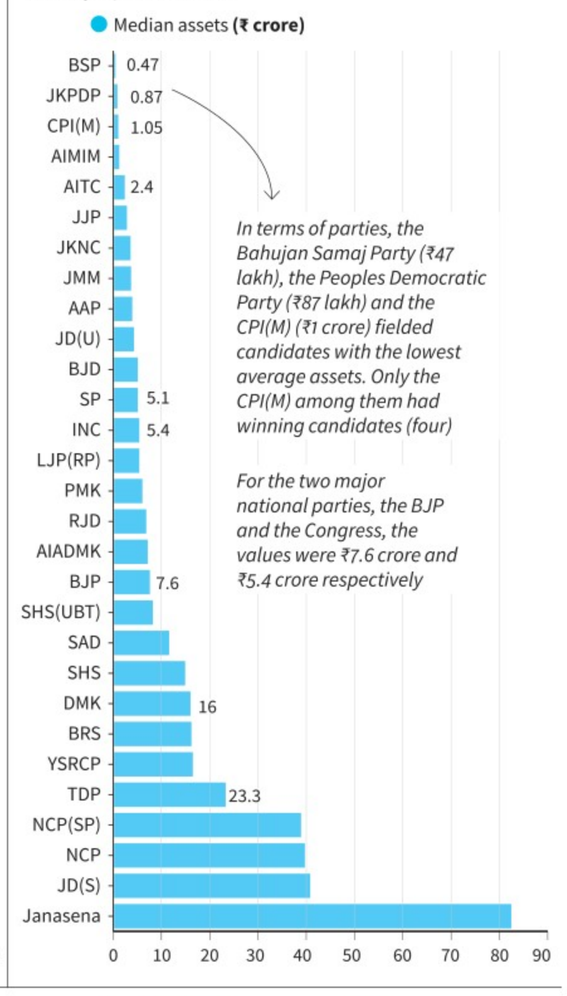
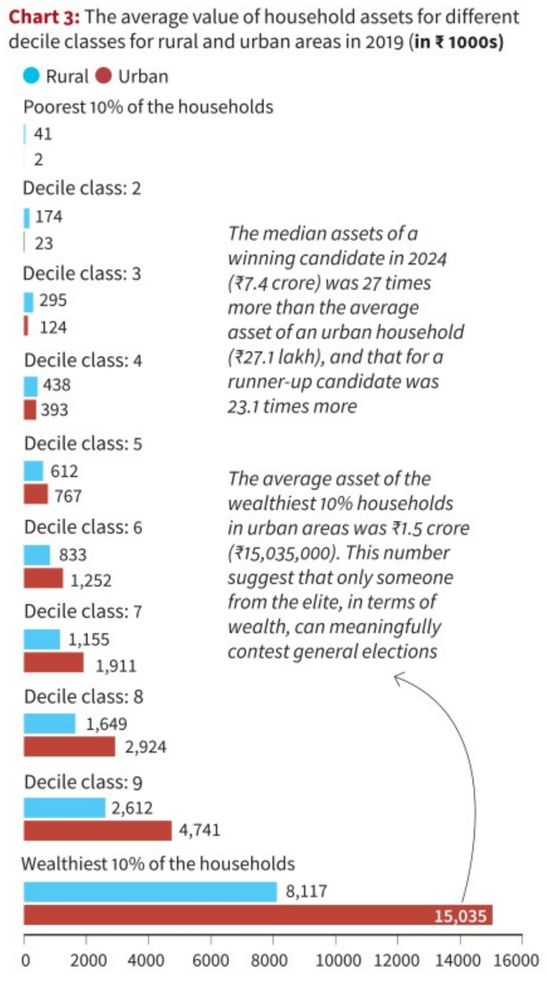


Chart 3: The average value of household assets for different decile classes for rural and urban areas in 2019 **(in ₹ 1000s)**



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1974

China and France conduct nuclear tests in atmosphere

China and France exploded on Monday nuclear devices in the atmosphere. While the French explosion took place over Mururoa atoll in the Pacific, China conducted the test in the Lop Nor region. Neither the French nor the Chinese Government officially announced the blasts. But senior Australian officials said their intelligence source was "infallible" and had been checked and double-checked. According to Indian Government officials, the Chinese explosion took place at 11-30 hrs. IST on Monday.

Protest Against French Test

CANBERRA, June 17. Australia and New Zealand said to-day that France had exploded a nuclear bomb over Mururoa atoll in the Pacific and immediately registered their strong protests.

The Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Gough Whitlam, said his Government was deeply concerned by the blast to-day which ushered in France's ninth series of tests in the South Pacific.

The New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. Norman Kirk, said he had dispatched a protest to Paris over the resumption of testing "in violation of our rights the rights of our South Pacific neighbours under international law."

China's Explosion

NEW DELHI, June 17. Announcing this, a press note issued by the Department of Atomic Energy here this evening said, on the basis of the signals obtained at Indian monitoring stations the explosion was conducted in the atmosphere. China, which exploded its first nuclear bomb in 1964, may have by now conducted about 17 nuclear tests with to-day's test.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1924

Rains In Bombay.

SUBURBAN RY TRAFFIC SUSPENDED.
(ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA.)
BOMBAY, June 17.

Some of the Bombay Development projects have been washed away by sea as a result of yesterday's rains. Traffic in Chowpathy has been partially restored while Harvey Road is still under water.

Due to a heavy downpour this morning, the G.I.P. Suburban railway Traffic was dislocated. Weather continued to be inclement.

From Page One

Nine killed in rail accident in Bengal

"We have to control human error and [installation of] Kavach is the most important thing on which work is going on in mission mode. So far, we have introduced Kavach for 1,500 km and another 3,000 km will be completed this year," Ms. Sinha said.

She said the railway network in West Bengal was being included under Kavach protection (a made-in-India technology to prevent collisions of trains travelling on the same track) this year as part of the 3,000 km being brought under surveillance.

Mamata blames Railways

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who visited the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital and met the injured, put the blame on the Railways, and said the Ministry had become "totally parentless".

Ms. Banerjee, who was Railway Minister in the UPA-II government, said she had devised an anti-collision device but it had not been implemented in the country. "When I was Rail Minister I first implemented the anti-collision system. But all trains in India are still not under this system. Passenger safety is negligible in the current state of Indian Railways. There is no rail budget. The Ministry is there just in name," she said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the railway accident as "saddening" and offered condolences to those who lost their loved ones.

"I pray that the injured recover at the earliest. Spoke to officials and took stock of the situation. Rescue operations are underway to assist the affected. The Railways Minister Shri@AshwiniVaishnaw Ji is on the way to the site of the mishap as well," the PM posted on social media.

Ex gratia announced

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw reached the accident site and took stock of the relief work. The Minister met the injured at the medical college hospital. He declared an ex gratia of ₹10 lakh for the family of each of the dead, ₹2.5 lakh for the seriously injured, and ₹50,000 for those who sustained minor injuries. Mr. Vaishnaw said the accident would be investigated by the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS).

The accident has severely affected rail movement in north Bengal and northeastern States.
(With PTI inputs)

Rahul keeps Rae Bareli; Priyanka for Wayanad

Mr. Gandhi said it was a difficult decision for him as he has an emotional connection with both Rae Bareli and the people of Wayanad. "I have an old relation with Rae Bareli and I am very happy that I will be representing it. But this was not an easy decision because there is attachment to both the places (Wayanad and Rae Bareli)," he told reporters soon after Mr. Kharge announced the decision.

"I am very happy to be able to represent Wayanad, and all I will say is that I won't let them feel his (Mr. Gandhi's) absence. As he said, he will come frequently, but I will work just as hard and will try to make everyone happy and be a good representative," Ms. Vadra said.

She also asserted that her ties with Rae Bareli and Amethi could not break as she had worked there for 20 years, and she would continue to assist her brother in Rae Bareli.

If Ms. Vadra wins the Lok Sabha bypoll, all three members of the Gandhi family will be in Parliament for the first time.

"Let's say both the constituencies will get two MPs," Mr. Gandhi said. He added that the past five years had been "a fantastic and very enjoyable experience" as the MP of Wayanad.

Shah chairs meet on Manipur, CM not invited

Even as the meeting was under way, hundreds of vehicles carrying essential commodities to the Imphal valley were stuck along National Highway 37, which connects Assam to Manipur, due to a blockade imposed by Kuki-Zo Village Volunteers in Jiribam. They said they were doing this in response to people from the Meitei community "deliberately preventing Kuki-Zo people from using NH-37", also a lifeline for Jiribam.

The Home Ministry said Mr. Shah conducted a "holistic review" of the security situation, and directed officials to ensure that no further violence took place in Manipur.

The Minister said the deployment of Central security forces would be increased, and, if required, they should be strategically placed to "restore peace and tranquillity" in the State. He further directed that strict action must be taken under law against the perpetrators of violence. He said the government was fully committed to ensuring safety and security of all citizens of Manipur.

The meeting lasted an hour. A top source said the meeting focused on the "current security situation" and the "government is taking inputs from multiple channels to arrive at some decisions in the coming days."

The BJP-ruled State has been affected by ethnic violence between the tribal Kuki-Zo people and the majority Meitei community since May 3, 2023. More than 50,000 people have been displaced and at least 221 people killed so far.

NSAs of India, U.S. review progress on iCET, silent on Pannun investigation

Ajit Doval and Jake Sullivan resolve to prevent the 'leakage' of sensitive technologies to countries of 'concern'; they welcome the discussions on India's planned acquisition of MQ-9B drones, announce launch of a new semiconductor partnership between General Atomics and Indian firm 3rdiTech

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and his U.S. counterpart, Jake Sullivan, who is on a two-day visit to India, on Monday resolved to prevent the "leakage" of sensitive and dual-use technologies to countries of "concern" as they chaired the second meeting of the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET).

Mr. Sullivan arrived just hours after reports confirmed that Indian national Nikhil Gupta was extradited to the U.S. for alleged links to a plot to assassinate Sikh separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. While neither side confirmed if the Pannun case was discussed, it was expected to be high on the agenda.

During the second iCET meeting, the two NSAs set the vision for the next chapter of the strategic technology partnership, according to a joint fact sheet issued after the dialogue.

"They underscored their commitment to orienting our cooperation around breakthrough achievements in priority critical and emerging-technology areas, by focusing our efforts on co-production, co-development, and research and development opportunities to ensure we stay at the leading edge of innovation and enhancing coordination with like-minded nations to deliver secure, reliable, and cost-competitive technology solutions for the Indian and American people and our partners around the world," the fact sheet said.

Mr. Sullivan also held talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and later called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Met US NSA Jake Sullivan. India is committed to further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership for global good," Mr. Modi said on X.

Cementing ties: U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan calls on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

On Tuesday, both the NSAs are scheduled to address the India-U.S. iCET roundtable with industry heads, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Mr. Sullivan's India visit was cancelled twice earlier due to geopolitical developments.

India and the U.S. are currently in advanced stages of talks for the purchase of 31 MQ-9B unmanned aerial vehicles and licensed manufacture of General Electric GE-414 jet engines as well as the Stryker infantry vehicles.

"We welcome the discussions on India's planned acquisition of the MQ-9B platforms, the possible co-production of land warfare systems, and progress on other co-production initiatives outlined in the India-U.S. Roadmap for Defense Industrial Cooperation," the fact sheet said in this regard.

On semiconductors, a priority area for both countries, the fact sheet announced the launch of a new strategic semiconductor partnership between General Atomics and Indian firm 3rdiTech to co-develop semiconductor design and manufacture of "precision-guided ammunition and other national security-focused electronics platforms".

The fact sheet also outlined several steps both countries would take in new and emerging areas which in a large way would also address dependency on China.

For instance, on rare-earth minerals, it said, "Promoting India's vital role in the Mineral Security Partnership, including through co-investing in a lithium resource project in South America and a rare earths deposit in Africa, to responsibly and sustainably diversify critical mineral supply chains."

The ambitious iCET was announced by Mr. Modi and U.S. President Joseph Biden on the sidelines of the Quad Summit in Tokyo in May 2022 and was launched by the NSAs in January 2023 comprising key technology sectors including space, semiconductors, advanced telecommunications, artificial intelligence, quantum science, biotechnology, and clean energy.

Subsequently, new areas were included including biotechnology, critical minerals and rare earths processing technologies, digital connectivity, digital public infrastructure and advanced materials.

Pannun investigation

Indian national Mr. Gupta, 52, was arrested in the Czeck Republic last year at the request of the U.S. government over the plot against Pannun.

India, which has come under intense pressure from the U.S. and other countries, has instituted a high-level investigation into the matter.

Won't do any personal work of Muslims and Yadavs, says JD(U)'s Sitamarhi MP-elect

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Janata Dal (United)'s MP-elect for the Sitamarhi Lok Sabha seat, Devesh Chandra Thakur, on Monday reiterated that Muslims and Yadavs did not vote for him, and he would not do their "personal work".

Two days ago, while speaking at a function in Sitamarhi, Mr. Thakur had said that the two communities had voted for Lalu Prasad's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). "How can I do their work? All my Yadav and Muslim brothers are welcome for tea, but don't talk about work. I will not do your work," he said.

His comments created a flutter in Bihar's political circles.

'Doing it for 30 years'

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Thakur said he would not do any work for the communities in his personal capacity. "Yes, I will not do any personal work of Muslims and Yadavs. I will offer them tea and sweets, and chat with them if they visit my residence. I have been doing their personal work for more than 30 years. But this election, I am really hurt by the way they did not vote for me. However, I will keep on doing public work."

Devesh Chandra Thakur

Asked if the statement will hamper his public image, Mr. Thakur replied, "What will hurt me more than what they have done to me this time? Not even 5% of voters from the two communities voted for me. I have done the maximum work for them."

Mr. Thakur said his assessment of the voting pattern was based on "figures received from booth-level workers". Hailing from the Brahmin community, Mr. Thakur secured 5,15,719 votes, beating the RJD's Arjun Ray who got 4,64,363 votes.

Muslims and Yadavs are considered the core voters of the RJD and have helped party supremo Mr. Lalu Prasad to be at the helm for 15 years in Bihar. This Lok Sabha election, the RJD got 22.14% votes, the highest vote share, but won only four seats.

In Sitamarhi, Muslims and Yadavs make up six lakh voters. According to the caste-based survey, Muslims account for 17.7% of the population of the State and the Yadavs 14.27%, the biggest voter base among the OBCs.

The RJD lashed out at Mr. Thakur saying the MP-elect insulted 32% of Bihar's population.

BJP announces polls in-charge for three States and J&K

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) signalled its readiness for the Assembly elections in three States and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, where the election is going to be held for the first time since the dilution of Article 370 and removal of statehood.

In a communiqué from the BJP, the party stated that Union Ministers Bhupender Yadav and Ashwini Vaishnaw will be election in-charge for Maharashtra; their Cabinet colleagues Dharmendra Pradhan and Tripura MP Biplab Deb for Haryana; Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for Jharkhand; and Union Minister G. Kishen Reddy will be in charge of Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier this month, the Election Commission of India (EC), keeping to the Supreme Court deadline of September 30, invited non-recognised but registered parties to apply for their preferred election symbols.

The delimitation of Assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir took place in May 2022, with the Jammu area getting six more constituencies and the Kashmir Valley getting one more seat in a House of 114 members, and 24 seats kept for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Bypoll candidates announced

The BJP on Monday announced candidates for bypolls to four Assembly seats in West Bengal scheduled for July 10. The party has fielded All India Football Federation president Kalyan Chaubey from Maniktala seat in Kolkata. Manas Kumar Ghosh from Raiganj in Uttar Dinajpur, Manoj Kumar Biswas from Ranaghat Dakshin (SC) in Nadia and Binay Kumar Biswas from Bagda (SC).

Centre hands over Reasi terror attack case to NIA

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Monday transferred the Reasi terror attack case to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Nine pilgrims were killed on June 9 when terrorists opened fire on their bus in Jammu and Kashmir.

The development came a day after Home Minister Amit Shah chaired meetings to review the security arrangements in the Union Territory in the wake of the terror attacks and also for preparations in the run-up to the Amaranth Yatra.

In the Jammu division, Mr. Shah has directed security agencies to replicate the successes achieved in the Kashmir Valley with the "area domination plan" and "zero terror plan".

The Minister said the fight against terrorism in J&K was in its decisive phase and stressed seamless coordination among the agencies.

Survivor of Chhattisgarh attack still in critical state

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Saddam Qureshi, the sole survivor of the incident in Chhattisgarh's Arang in which two cattle transporters from Uttar Pradesh were found dead along with him below a bridge earlier this month, remains on ventilator support in a critical condition.

According to doctors treating him, the next two to three days will be crucial in determining his recovery.

Mr. Qureshi, 25, is being attended to by a team of 14 doctors at Shri Balaji Super Speciality Hospital in Raipur.

He has undergone a brain and a gastro-intestinal surgery. Since then, he has been unable to speak.

Centre treating Manipur as its 'fiefdom', says MP-elect

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Inner Manipur MP-elect A. Bimol Akoijam of the Congress on Monday said the Union government was "treating Manipur as a non-entity" and as its own "fiefdom" "as if there is no State government there".

He was reacting to the fact that Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh had not been invited for the security review meeting chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Monday.

In addition to the Centre coming under suspicion among some populations of the State, this also raises questions about the Chief Minister's "submissiveness", Mr. Akoijam said. It was "intriguing" that the Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police were there but not the Chief Minister, he said.

A. Bimol Akoijam

"For the security review meeting of a territory like Jammu and Kashmir, it was seen that the Lieutenant-General was present at the meeting. Insofar as there is a State government, law and order is a State subject. It appears as if the Union government is treating Manipur like a non-entity. The State is being run as some sort of a fiefdom of the Union government," Mr. Akoijam told *The Hindu*, adding, "The rest of the country should take note – this is just the Union government flexing its muscles".

'CM should quit'

This came even as the Delhi Meitei Coordinating Committee – a conglomerate of various Meitei civil society organisations – passed a resolution on Sunday, calling for the Manipur Chief Minister to resign along with his Cabinet, if they are unable to take control of the situation.

Several Meitei civil society leaders told *The Hindu* that the Chief Minister's absence in the meeting was "yet another sign" that the crisis in Manipur was directly being controlled by the Union Home Ministry in Delhi.

Prohibitory orders imposed in Balasore after communal clash

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure have been imposed at a small locality in Balasore town of Odisha following a communal clash between two communities on Monday.

In the morning, some people raised alarm over the water of a drain near a mausoleum turning red.

They alleged that mass slaughter of cows was carried out for the Id-ul-Azha celebrations. As the news spread to other parts of the town, people blocked the Chandipur-Balasore main road.

It led to massive tension between members of two communities, who threw stones at each other. Some people sustained injuries in the attack. Vehicles were damaged and security personnel were also attacked. The administration clamped prohibitory orders under Section 144 in the area from Pir Bazar to Patrapada.

"The situation is under control. Action will be taken against culprits who are responsible for vitiating harmony between two communities," Balasore Collector Asish Thakare said.

Mr. Thakare said the administration was keeping a close watch on the situation.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Odisha was a peace-loving State, and appealed to all to maintain peace and harmony.

Sudden, sharp jerk felt like earthquake: passengers

Press Trust of India
JALPAIGURI

The last four coaches of the Agartala-Sealdah Kanchanjunga Express that took the impact of the accident at Rangapani, near New Jalpaiguri, in West Bengal on Monday were at the front end of the train till Lumding on Monday. But at that station, as on any other day, the locomotive was coupled at the other end and these four coaches brought up the rear, which turned out to be fatal for a few passengers. The express train was rammed from behind by a goods train.

A passenger in a sleeper coach in the middle said that after the train changed direction, a general seating coach, two parcel vans and a guard van were at the rear. The general seating coach was the worst hit, being thrown onto adjacent tracks, he said.

"Our train was moving very slowly when it reached Rangapani, a few kilometres from New Jalpaiguri," the passenger recounted, standing beside one of the mangled coaches.

Another passenger described a sudden, sharp jerk accompanied by a loud sound, and the train stopped abruptly. Upon disembarking, he saw the goods train had hit the rake from behind.

"We were having tea when the train stopped suddenly with a jerk," he said. A pregnant woman, travelling with her family, said she fell off her seat upon impact. "It felt like an earthquake. It took us some time to collect ourselves and understand what happened," she said.

Loco pilot of goods train had permission to cross red signal

Documents show stationmaster of Rangapani station authorised him to pass all signals; permit is issued only when there is no obstruction and section is clear; it's not known how clearance was given when express train had not crossed section

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The loco pilot of the goods train that rammed the Kanchanjunga Express from behind between the Rangapani and Chattar Hat stations of Northeast Frontier Railway in West Bengal on Monday had permission to cross all signals in danger.

Documents made available to *The Hindu* revealed that the stationmaster at Rangapani issued Travel Authority (TA-912) authorising the loco pilot to cross all signals in red. The authority number 4918 said, "Automatic signalling has failed and you are, hereby, authorised to pass all automatic signals between RNI (Rangapani) station and CAT (Chattar Hat) station."

The authority listed the designated numbers of signals which the goods train could pass, including the signal at the accident site.

Documents also revealed that Kanchanjunga Express was given a similar authority to pass all signals in danger.

Though the signal failure between Rangapani and Chattar Hat was detected at 5.50 a.m., it was not declared a prolonged failure since it was expected to be rectified by the Signal and Telecommunication Department soon. The automatic block system continued to be in force and seven trains were allowed to cross the signals in red with paper travel authorities, the sources said.

A senior railway officer said analysis of the speedometer of the goods train would show the exact speed during collision and also whether the loco pilot applied the emergency brakes on seeing the express train. The officer, who did not want to be named, said the issuing of paper authority allowing the goods train to cross all signals in red needed a thorough investigation. "TA-912 is issued only when there is no obstruction and the section is clear. It is not known how the stationmaster of the Rangapani railway station issued clearance when Kanchanjunga Express had not crossed the section...," he said.

The reason Kanchanjunga Express stopped at the signal, how the stationmaster issued paper authority to pass signals in red when the section was not clear, whether the loco pilot of the goods train applied emergency brakes and other circumstances that led to the accident would be known in the detailed inquiry, the sources added.

Another senior railway officer said that going by the General & Subsidiary Rules, the loco pilot of the goods train had violated the speed restriction of 15 kmph (in clear visibility).

Quoting Rule SR 9.02/1(a), he said that "when encountering an automatic signal at 'ON' (red) aspect and after waiting for the prescribed time, the loco pilot should proceed with great caution at a speed not exceeding 15 kmph...looking out for any possible obstruction and be prepared to stop short of the same".

Emergency steps: Rescue operation under way at the train accident site in Darjeeling on Monday. ANI

Goods loco pilot violated speed curbs, says Board

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Railway Board said on Monday that *prima facie* findings of a probe into the Kanchanjunga Express accident in West Bengal indicated that the goods train violated speed restrictions it had to follow given the "defective" automatic signalling system. The goods train driver was speeding, the Board said in response to reports that he was given a written authority, TA 912, by the stationmaster to cross all red signals.

Helpline numbers

- New Jalpaiguri **6287801758**
- Alipurduar **03564270871**
- Jalpaiguri Road **7605036150**
- New Coochbehar **7605036155**
- Guwahati **03612731621**
- Lumding **03674263958**
- Agartala **9862108974**
- Badarpur **03843268424**
- Barpeta Road **9287998173**
- Rangiya junction **9101095573**
- Dharmanagar **9862280614**

'Govt. mismanaging Railways, focusing on vanity projects'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Expressing condolences over the loss of lives in the train accident in Jalpaiguri of West Bengal, leaders of Opposition parties targeted the Narendra Modi government and sought accountability.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, a former Railway Minister himself, alleged "utter mismanagement" of the Railway Ministry in the 10 years of the Modi government.

"As a responsible Opposition, it is our bounden duty to underline how the Modi government has systematically converted the Rail Ministry into a platform of 'camera-driven' self-promotion. Today's tragedy is yet another reminder of this stark reality," Mr. Kharge alleged in a post on X.

'Blatant negligence'

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, in a post, said, "The increase in railway accidents in the last 10 years is a direct result of the mismanagement and negligence of the Modi government," and asserted that "as a responsible Opposition, we will continue to question this blatant negligence and hold the Modi government accountable for these accidents".

"The Railway Ministry, busy in PR exercises, is miserably failing in its basic responsibility of ensuring safety. There was no accountability fixed after the deadly Balasore accident, and this latest tragedy is the result of no remedial steps taken to prevent such accidents in the future," Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said.

> ...the Modi government has systematically converted the Rail Ministry into a platform of camera-driven self-promotion
>
> **MALLIKARJUN KHARGE**
> Congress president

CPI general secretary D. Raja said, "The Railway Ministry should focus on larger issues of infrastructure, rail track maintenance, signalling system, and proper manpower to prevent such mishaps. Earlier, the Railways used to have separate budget, but, ever since the BJP came to power, that is not the case."

In an X post, the Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party put out a 25-year-old video of Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal(U) chief Nitish Kumar, who had resigned as the Railway Minister after the Gaisal train tragedy of 1999 that killed over 285 people. "But Ashwini Vaishnaw in the Modi government, who had two major train accidents during his tenure, never once accepted the responsibility," it said.

Derek O'Brien of the Trinamool said "a government focused on vanity projects, does not care about safety".

Cong. slams textbook revision, says NCERT is working as an 'RSS affiliate'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) of working as an "affiliate" of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), amid the row over revision of NCERT textbooks.

In an X post, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh alleged that the NCERT was mounting an assault on the Constitution. He said the National Testing Agency had blamed the NCERT for the "grace marks" fiasco in NEET, but that was only for drawing attention away from its own failures.

"However, it is true that the NCERT is no longer a professional institution. It has been functioning as an RSS affiliate since 2014. It has just been revealed that its revised Class 11political science textbook criticises the idea of secularism as well as what it considers policies of political parties in this regard. NCERT's objective is to produce textbooks, not political pamphlets and propaganda," Mr. Ramesh alleged.

> NCERT is no longer a professional institution... NCERT's objective is to produce textbooks, not political pamphlets and propaganda
>
> **JAIRAM RAMESH**
> Congress leader

The Congress leader alleged that the NCERT was "mounting an assault on our country's Constitution in whose Preamble secularism features explicitly as a foundational pillar of the Indian Republic".

"Various Supreme Court judgments have clearly held secularism to be an essential part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution. The NCERT needs to remind itself that it is the National Council for Educational Research and Training, not the Nagpur or Narendra Council for Educational Research and Training. All of its textbooks are now of dubious quality vastly different from those that shaped me in school," he said.

Trinamool Congress MP Saket Gokhale also hit out at the NCERT, and said the government was hiding "inconvenient facts" from students.

The comments come amid changes including removal of certain events such as the Gujarat riots and Babri masjid demolition from the textbooks.

Uddhav's Sena to challenge Mumbai North West LS seat result in court

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray said on Monday that his party would challenge the Mumbai North-West Lok Sabha seat result in the Bombay High Court.

He alleged that party candidate Amol Kirtikar's "victory" was undermined by "misuse" of official machinery and labelled the result fraudulent.

He also said that the BJP would have won only 40 seats instead of 240 in the Lok Sabha election if the polling was "free and fair".

"Our victory was taken from us through the misuse of official machinery. We will file an election petition in court in a day or two, challenging the result of the Mumbai North West seat," he said.

Mr. Kirtikar lost to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena candidate Ravindra Waikar by a margin of 48 votes.

Mr. Aaditya termed the Election Commission 'entirely compromised'.

Party's legislator Anil Parab echoed his sentiments and called for the EC to act on the available information and declare Mr. Kirtikar the winner.

Mr. Parab said that their tally showed a lead of 650 votes up to the 19th round of counting, after which transparency was lacking.

Experts want their names out of books

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Political scientists Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar on Monday have written to the NCERT objecting to the new textbooks carrying their names even after they disassociated themselves from the revisions. They said that they would be forced to take legal recourse if the books with their names were not withdrawn immediately.

Mr. Palshikar and Mr. Yadav said they do not want the NCERT to "hide" behind their names to pass on to students such textbooks of political science that are "politically biased, academically indefensible and pedagogically dysfunctional."

Mr. Palshikar and Mr. Yadav, who were chief advisers for political science textbooks last year, said that the rationalisation exercise has "mutilated" the books beyond recognition.

"The new editions of these books that have been published with our names should be withdrawn... If the NCERT fails to take immediate corrective action, we may be forced to take legal recourse," they said.

NMDC Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)
'Khanji Bhavan', 10-3-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500028. CIN : L13100TG1958GOI001674
Email : ramojirao@nmdc.co.in, jvenkatesan@nmdc.co.in, akpadhy@nmdc.co.in

OPEN TENDER ENQUIRY

Tender No.HQMM/4006-23/1100001621/99 Dt: 18/06/2024

MSTC event no: NMDC/Head Office/ Material Management/7/24-25/ET/228/DUMPER 40 TON

Online Tenders are invited through E-Procurement Mode for the following equipment from reputed manufacturers directly or through their accredited agents in India required for NMDC Ltd, Diamond Mining Project, Panna.

Description of Equipment	Qty (No.)	Display of Tender Documents Period	Last date & time for submission of offer	Earnest Money Deposit
Supply of Dumper – 40 Ton, along with Operation and Maintenance Spares for 6 Years / 7,500 hours whichever is earlier.	01	Draft Tender 18/06/2024. To 25/06/2024. The Prebid meeting is scheduled on 25/06/2024 (15:00 hrs) through Microsoft Teams Final Tender 02/07/2024 To 22/07/2024.	22/07/2024 2.30 PM	Rs. 2,00,000/-

Complete Tender document is available in website : www.nmdc.co.in, https://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprocn/&http://eprocure.gov.in.
Any corrigendum to the above tender will be uploaded only on MSTC Portal / NMDC website and will not be published in newspapers. Prospective bidders should visit MSTC Portal and NMDC website, regularly from time to time to take note of corrigendum, if any.
For further details logon to Tender Section of our website: www.nmdc.co.in
General Manager (Materials)

पिंपरी-चिंचवड महानगरपालिका, पिंपरी-18

विद्युत विभाग

ई-निविदा सुचना क्र - Ele/HO/WTP/02-01/2024-25

पिंपरी चिंचवड महानगरपालिकेकडून खालील नमुद केलल्या कामासाठी ई टेडरिंग पद्धतीने परसेंट रेट निविदा मागविण्यात येत आहे. प्रचलित दराने GST बिलात अदा केली जाईल त्यामुळे GST वगळून दर द्यावेत.

निविदा नोटीस क्रमांक	कामाचे नाव	निविदा रक्कम	बयाणा रक्कम	अनामत रक्कम	कामाची मुदत (महिने)	निविदा फॉर्म फी जीएसटीसह (परत न मिळणारी)
02-01/ 2024-25	मनपाचे भामा आसखेड पाणी पुरवठा योजना अंतर्गत अशुद्ध जलउपसा केंद्रासाठी विजपुरवठा करणे व सबस्टेशन विषयक कामे करणे	16,65,24,873	8,32,624	83,26,244	18	37430/-

निविदा नोटीस क्रमांक 02-01/2024-25 कामाकरिता वेळापत्रक	
ई - निविदा उपलब्ध कालावधी	दिनांक - 15/06/2024 ते दि. 09/07/2024
ई - निविदा स्विकृती अंतिम वेळ व दिनांक	दिनांक - 09/07/2024 दुपारी 3.00 वा.
निविदा पूर्व सभा	दिनांक - 26/06/2024 सकाळी 11.00 वाजता
निविदा उघडणेचा दिनांक	दिनांक - 11/07/2024 दुपारी 3.00 वा. (शक्य झाल्यास)

वरील कामांसाठीचा तपशील उदा. बयाणा, अनामत रक्कम, निविदाच्या अटी शर्ती, निविदा शेड्युल्ड बी इ. माहिती https://mahatenders.gov.in या वेबसाईटवर उपलब्ध आहे. त्यानुसार निविदा भरावयाची आहे.

सदरची ई टेडरिंग प्रक्रिये अंतर्गत निविदा वर नमुद केलेल्या दिनांक व नमुद केलेल्या वेळेपर्यंत ई टेंडरिंग पद्धतीने वेबसाईटवरूनच भरात येतील. निविदाधारकांनी निविदेची फॉर्म फी बयाणा रक्कम मनपा पेमेंट गेट वे सिस्टिमद्वारे भरावयाची आहे. कोणतेही कारण न देता निविदा पुर्णत: किंवा अंशत: मंजुर अथवा नामंजूर करण्याचा अधिकार मा. आयुक्त सो. यांनी स्वत:कडे राखुन ठेवला आहे. सदरची निविदा https://mahatenders.gov.in या वेबसाईटवर उपलब्ध आहे.

सदरची ई निविदा प्रणाली वापराबाबत काही तांत्रिक अडचण निर्माण झाल्यास NIC यांचेकडील ई-मेल support-eproc@nic.in अथवा Help Desk Number 0120-4200462,0120-4001002, 0120-4001005,0120-6277787 या दुरध्वनीवर संपर्क साधावा.

सही/-
(बाबासाहेब गलबले)
सह. शहर अभियंता (वि.)
पिंपरी-चिंचवड महानगरपालिका,
पिंपरी - 18

जाहिरात क्र -28
क्र. विमुका /05/कावि/237/2024
दि. 14/06/2024

INBRIEF

Prosecution confident that DNA report will suffice

The prosecution in the alleged Sheena Bora murder case is confident that her remains going missing will not weaken their case as they have a DNA report that establishes their argument. While the principal accused Indrani Mukerjea's advocate Ranjeet Sangle has called the missing articles advantageous for themselves as the DNA report itself is questionable.

During the ongoing trial in the special CBI court in Mumbai, special public prosecutor C.J. Nandode informed on Thursday that they are unable to find Ms. Bora's remains, which were collected from Gagode village of Raigad district in 2015. This came to light when Sir J. J. Hospital, Mumbai's forensic expert Dr. Zeba Khan was in the court to record her deposition in the matter on having shown Ms. Bora's purported remains.

Student from Kerala found dead in IIT-Kharagpur

A third-year student of the Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur was found dead on the Sarojini Naidu-Indira Gandhi Hall premises on Monday. Devika Pillai, a resident of Kerala, had recently returned from home. Her family was informed about the death. The body was sent to the Kharagpur sub-divisional hospital for a post-mortem examination. The institution said the police were conducting a probe and it was fully cooperating with the authorities. "Our foremost priority is to extend our heartfelt condolences and support to Pillai's family and friends. We are in close contact with her family and are providing all necessary assistance to help them through this difficult time," the IIT-Kharagpur said.

'Digi Yatra could be expanded to hotels, rail travel, public places'

The e-gates are also being ramped up at airports to cover various checkpoints such as baggage drop and boarding gates; the vision is to enhance seamless movement across India, says CEO of Digi Yatra Foundation Suresh Khadakbhavi

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

A passenger using the Digi Yatra facility, which has been rolled out at 14 airports across the country; and, right, CEO of Digi Yatra Suresh Khadakbhavi. B. VELANKANNI RAJ, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Digi Yatra, a check-in service at airports based on facial recognition technology, may be implemented at hotels and public places such as historical monuments, says the chief executive officer of the Digi Yatra Foundation, Suresh Khadakbhavi. A prototype for this use-case has been developed and discussions are on with government agencies such as the Tourism Ministry, he adds.

"The vision is to create a travel stack for seamless movement across India," Mr. Khadakbhavi said in an exclusive interview with *The Hindu* while talking about the future use-cases of Digi Yatra.

"This would enhance travel experience for a tourist who has to produce a passport for check-in at a hotel or at police stations for verification," he said. Digi Yatra could also be used for rail travel, and an initial discussion has also been held with the Railway Ministry. Nationals of certain countries such as Pakistan are required to report their arrival and intended departure at each place of stay within 24 hours at the nearest police station. Tourists of other nationalities who hold a visa for a period of more than 180 days, are also required to register at the Foreign Regional Registration Office (FRRO).

Mr. Khadakbhavi explained that extending Digi Yatra to hotels and public places would prevent data leakage as people often tend to share unencrypted form of identity documents through photocopies and screenshots, whereas Digi Yatra ID does not carry any personally identifiable information. The Digi Yatra Central Ecosystem only saves a hash value or a numerical value that identifies the content of the file so that none of the four data items shared by passengers at the time of registering on the app (name, Aadhaar, face scan, and passport number) can be leaked anywhere.

Launched in 2022

The Digi Yatra initiative is digital processing of air travellers which uses their biometrics such as a facial scan instead of a boarding pass to enable paperless movement through various checkpoints at an airport. The initiative was rolled out at airports in December 2022, and today covers 14 airports while 15 more airports will be included by the end of 2024.

The primary aim of the initiative at the time its policy document was launched in 2017 was to improve passenger throughput (or number of passengers passing through various checkpoints) at airports. This would achieve the objective of enhancing airport infrastructure needed to cater to increasing passenger volumes by ensuring more efficient airport operations, alongside physical expansion of airports in the country. But the proposed use-case for hotels and other public places implies that the role for Digi Yatra could extend beyond air travel. The Digi Yatra Foundation itself is a not-for-profit private company which is a consortium of five private airports that have a combined shareholding of 74%, and the Airports Authority of India which holds the remainder 26% share.

At airports, so far Digi Yatra e-gates were deployed primarily at entry gates outside airports as well as security screening queues inside the passenger terminal building. Now, they increasingly can be seen at more touch-points such as boarding gates as well as baggage drops. "Digi Yatra was envisaged for all the touchpoints, such as airport entry gates, check-in, baggage drop and boarding gates. But airports rolled them out for airport entry gates and security checkpoints, and some have started to also implement it at baggage drop," Mr. Khadakbhavi said explaining this would eliminate the need for producing boarding passes wherever passengers are required to do so.

On the issue of privacy concerns raised by its policy document, such as access to data for third-party vendors and the circumstances under which its mandatory data purge within 24 hours can be set aside, the CEO said that the foundation will soon be releasing a revised policy document to address language issues that have raised concerns over possible misuse.

On concerns over lack of consent from users at airports where enrolments are being carried out on the day of travel, Mr. Khadakbhavi blamed "overenthusiasm" among private staff in enrolling travellers and that they were in conversation with airports to ensure their staff is adequately sensitised.

Cancel green nod given to Great Nicobar project: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday demanded the withdrawal of clearances and a ground-up review of the ₹72,000-crore infrastructure project, being championed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, on the Great Nicobar Island.

The Great Nicobar Project, as it is called, involves developing a trans-shipment port, an international airport, township development, and a 450-MVA gas and solar-based power plant on the island. The project area is expected to be spread over 130 sq. km. of pristine forest, and has been accorded environmental clearance – one of the mandatory pre-requisites – by an expert committee.

These issues were the backbone of a legal challenge being adjudicated at the National Green Tribunal (NGT), following which the court constituted an expert committee to investigate aspects of the clearance. The results are not yet public.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said on Monday that the coastline where the port and the project was proposed to come up is an earthquake prone zone, and saw a permanent subsidence of about 15 feet during the tsunami.

M.P. cancels plan to fell 27,000 trees to build VVIP bungalows

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Following days of protest by citizens and environmentalists, the Madhya Pradesh government on Monday rejected a proposal that required chopping of more than 27,000 trees for the construction of residences for MLAs and Ministers in Bhopal.

Minister of Urban Development and Housing Kailash Vijayvargiya said that alternative locations would be examined for the project and the public would be consulted for the new proposal.

"In the interest of the environment and the redensification plan for new Bhopal and existing trees in the area, the presented proposal has been rejected after thorough consideration and instructions have been given to examine other alternative places. Discussions will also be held with citizens and public representatives at the initial level for the new proposal," Mr. Vijayvargiya said in a post on X.

Kailash Vijayvargiya

The Madhya Pradesh Housing Board also issued an order stating that the proposal had been rejected in view of environmental concerns.

Several citizen groups and environmentalists had been holding protests for the past one week in the city's Shivaji Nagar and Tulsi Nagar areas, where the proposed project was to take place. The protesters, mainly women, also hugged trees in the area, evoking the famous Chipko Movement of the 1970s.

Under the proposed plan, the government wants to demolish more than 2,200 government houses and bungalows in a 297-acre area to make new houses, flats, and bungalows for government officials, MLAs, and State Ministers. The estimated cost of the project is more than ₹ 2,300 crore.

Congress leader P. C. Sharma said, "The people have won... This is a victory of environmentalists, social workers, people of Bhopal, mothers and sisters."

Five Maoists gunned down in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Five Maoists, two of them women, were killed in an encounter with security forces at Chaibasa in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand on Monday, officials said. The exchange of fire took place near Lipunga under Gua police station limits, around 200 km from Ranchi.

"Five Maoists were killed in an encounter with the security forces. One of the deceased was a zonal commander, another was a sub-zonal commander and the rest were squad members. Two Maoists were apprehended, one of them being an area commander and the other a squad member. The encounter took place between 5.15 a.m. and 5.40 a.m. The security forces suffered no injuries," Jharkhand Police spokesperson and Inspector-General (Operation) Amol V. Homkar told *The Hindu*.

Personnel of the Chaibasa police, Jharkhand Jaguar, and Cobra battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) took part in the operation.

The team recovered weapons including one INSAS rifle, two self-loading rifles, one .303 (rifle), two bolt-action rifles, a 9 mm pistol, 13 detonators, Naxal literature, medicines, tents, blankets and other materials. Officials said one of the deceased carried a bounty of ₹10 lakh and another of ₹5 lakh.

50 tourists evacuated from Sikkim town ravaged by rain

Press Trust of India
GANGTOK

Nearly 50 tourists were rescued from north Sikkim's Lachung on Monday and moved to Mangan town, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) said.

The rescue operation, however, had to be halted due to inclement weather, and the remaining tourists would be moved on Tuesday, it said. The operation began after the BRO restored connectivity between Chungthang and Mangan via the recently built bridge at Toong over the Teesta river.

"The BRO in close coordination with civil administration and team of NDRF is leading the mammoth evacuation operation," a statement said.

Treacherous path: A flooded road along the swollen Teesta river after heavy rainfall in Sikkim on Monday. PTI

Incessant rain since June 12 wreaked havoc in Mangan, causing multiple landslips, and severing connectivity. Due to the blockage of various roads at several locations, 1,200 to 1,500 tourists got stranded in Lachung town, officials said.

The situation became grave after the collapse of the newly constructed suspension bridge at Sanklang as it was the main connection to north Sikkim and Dzongu, they said.

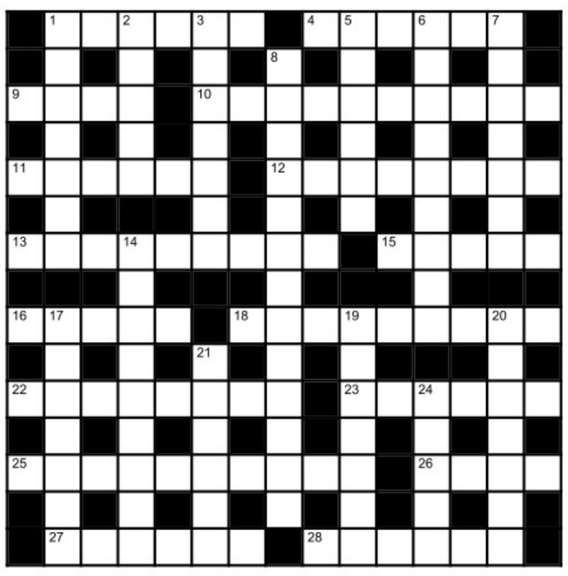
"Responding to the natural disaster by overcoming severe weather conditions and heavy rainfall, the BRO launched restoration efforts by mobilising huge manpower and machinery to restore connectivity to North Sikkim," the statement said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14204

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Parts of flower and others kept in empty pouches (6)
4 Judge having tea reportedly with visitors (6)
9 Spot an agent (4)
10 Shiny horse pregnant with offspring at home (10)
11 Knew estimate gathered was the most recent (6)
12 After removing the cap, catheters are used here (8)
13 Take the lead of professor retiring earlier (9)
15 Elected leaders of Chennai hosting one show exclusively... (5)
16 ...to wiretap with the French instrument (5)
18 About to manage chain of schools, say (9)
22 Selfless surgeon running to cover emergency at first (8)
23 Attacked by Russia, Ukraine finally defended hospital with daring leader (6)
25 Arrangement with colony... (10)
26 ...like supporting an advanced landmass (4)
27 Pressure disperses as South replaces West (6)
28 Heads of church provided some support to cover expenses initially (6)

Down

1 One occupying post is an innovator (7)
2 Article on that place... (5)
3 ...set on fire, line seen without heading (7)
5 Auntie decided to hold characters set free (6)
6 Device used to transport ill Esther to get CRT treatment (9)
7 Say, sopranos from India visiting Singapore and Spain to earn money (7)
8 Studies hiding corrupt and famous (13)
14 Official to pass bill finally at executive committee to run (9)
17 Warehouse lessor stays idle (7)
19 Impromptu score (7)
20 Opponents from many directions surpass Mumbai Indians (7)
21 Can incomplete hostels be boarding-houses? (6)
24 Order beer after small sip of cognac (5)

SUDOKU

8		5			4		1	9
		6				5		
	9				7			
			1	3			5	
4		8				1		3
	3			4	8			
			7				3	
		7				6		
3	1		2			7		5

No.SS6193 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

S	P	R	A	N	G		W	A	T	E	R	M	A	N
	E		L		U		E		U		E		C	
U	N	B	I	A	S	E	D		N	U	A	N	C	E
	N		B		T		L		I		D		O	
S	E	M	I	C	O	L	O	N	S		Y	O	R	E
					S		C		I		M		D	
S	H	A	D	D	O	C	K		A	D	A	G	I	O
	A		I								D		O	
M	I	A	S	M	A		R	O	G	U	E	O	N	E
	R		F		C		A		L					
A	B	B	A		C	A	N	T	A	L	O	U	P	E
	R		V		O		C		S		M		O	
S	U	D	O	K	U		H	O	G	M	A	N	A	Y
	S		U		N		E		O		N		C	
T	H	I	R	S	T	E	R		W	E	I	G	H	T

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	5	7	9	6	8	1	2	3
1	3	6	2	7	5	9	8	4
8	2	9	4	1	3	7	5	6
5	9	2	8	4	7	6	3	1
3	6	1	5	2	9	4	7	8
7	4	8	1	3	6	2	9	5
2	7	3	6	5	4	8	1	9
9	1	4	3	8	2	5	6	7
6	8	5	7	9	1	3	4	2

FAITH

A practical guide for all

Our spiritual leaders knew the importance of mother tongue and in order to make the common man realise divinity, spoke, sang and guided them in the local language. The Vaishnavite Azhwars in particular rendered yeomen service by raising awareness about the inherent divinity through their pasurams, rendered in Tamil, said Srirangam Srimad Andavan (Srimushnam) Srivaraha Mahadesikan in a discourse. The Nalayira Divya Prabandam is a rich treatise and a practical guide.

Bhakti is the only true nectar, and attainable by experiencing God. To achieve that, one has to follow the *neri* (norm), have *veri* (passion) and *kuri* (goal) and immerse oneself in godly thoughts.

Not for nothing has the Azhwar said, "*Unnum sor, parugu neer, thinnum vetrilai, ellam Kannan*" (the rice consumed, the water drunk, the betel leaves chewed are all nothing but Krishna).

God resides in everything and everyone and ready to embrace His devotee. However, *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *mada* (ego), *moha* (attachment) and *matsaryam* (envy) keep one away from God and one should divest oneself of these six qualities. Instead, one should only speak about Him. Reciting His many names such as Madhava, Kesava, will help one discern Narayana.

INBRIEF

Alembic gets U.S. FDA nod for hereditary angioedema jab

Alembic Pharmaceuticals Ltd. said it has received final approval from the U.S. health regulator for its generic Icatibant injection indicated for treating acute attacks of hereditary angioedema in adults. The injection has an estimated market size of $ 112 million for the 12 months ended March 2024, the company said in a filing, citing IQVIA data. Hereditary angioedema is a disorder characterised by recurrent episodes of severe swelling (angioedema) of different body parts. PTI

IFC to fund Brookfield's solar power project in Rajasthan

International Finance Corporation (IFC) will part finance a 550 MW solar power project in Bikaner, Rajasthan being developed by Brookfield Asset Management with $105 million through long-term non-convertible debentures allocated to the project's special purpose vehicles implementing the project. Brookfield will provide solar power to commercial and industrial consumers across India at more competitive tariffs and contribute to the nation's decarbonisation goals, IFC said.

China's factory output lags, property sector in doldrums

China's May industrial output lagged expectations and a slowdown in the property sector showed no signs of easing despite policy support, adding pressure on Beijing to shore up growth. May industrial output grew 5.6% from a year earlier, National Bureau of Statistics data showed, slowing from the 6.7% pace in April. However, retail sales, a gauge of consumption, in May rose 3.7% on year, accelerating from a 2.3% rise in April. REUTERS

Indian firms' Q1 revenue growth likely to slow: ICRA

Ratings agency expects operating profit margins to remain steady at 15-18%, but says growth could taper sequentially amid 'a perceived pause in infrastructure spending due to the general elections'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Revenue growth for Indian companies on a sequential basis was expected to taper in Q1 FY25 as they face headwinds including a slowdown in government spending due to the Lok Sabha polls but their operating profit margin (OPM) would remain steady between 15-18% as raw material costs were likely to remain stable, according to credit rating agency ICRA.

"The credit metrics of India Inc. in Q1 FY25 are estimated to remain largely stable with interest coverage ratio in the range of 4.7-5 times, against 4.9 times in Q4 FY24. Evolution of the global economic scenario and the onset and intensity of the monsoons in India, would remain a key monitorable over the near term," ICRA said in a report.

Silver lining: Corporate India's credit metrics likely to remain stable with interest coverage ratio between 4.7-5 times REUTERS

"The 5% YoY and 6.3% sequential revenue growth for Corporate India in Q4 FY24 was supported by healthy demand in consumer-oriented sectors like airlines, hotels, automotive and FMCG," said Kinjal Shah, Senior VP & Co-Group Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA Ltd.

"Growth is expected to marginally slow down in Q1 FY25... amidst a perceived temporary pause in the infrastructural activities due to the general elections," ICRA said.

Vistara offers 'top-up' salary to pilots to address disquiet

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Vistara has offered a "top-up" salary to its First Officers after it had recently faced a large number of flight cancellations partly due to unrest among a section of its cockpit crew over a new pay structure announced ahead of its merger with Air India, according to pilot sources.

The airline has also offered to evolve a remuneration for pilots who were unable to get at least 70-hours of flying in a month due to training-related delays on the part of the airline, the airline's CEO Vinod Kannan assured in a townhall with pilots in the third week of May, a Vistara spokesman confirmed.

> CEO Kannan offered to evolve a remuneration for pilots who were unable to get at least 70-hours of flying in a month due to training-related delays

First Officers were unhappy as the new pay structure announced in February reduced the minimum guaranteed hours of flying from 70 hours to 40 hours for all crew, resulting in the junior pilots facing a pay cut of about ₹80,000-₹1,40,000 on a monthly salary of ₹3.4 lakh.

In the May townhall, Mr. Kannan had assured pilots that most pilots would continue to still have 70 hours of flying. He also added that the small fraction of pilots who were not able to break even, or earn in the new regime what they were earning in the old regime after similar hours of flying, would receive a 'top up'. Airline sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that this top up amount was ₹5,000 for all First Officers.

Since pilots had also complained about hectic rosters that were not allowing them a work-life balance, and often resulting in them being pulled out for duties with just a 12-hour notice, Mr. Kannan assured them that the airline would study data on key parameters such as the number of times a pilot's request for leave was not granted, or cases of pilots being asked to report for duty with a 12-hour notice on their off days as well as deviations from the published roster.

The CEO also said that more pilots were being recruited to address the gap between the number of flights and pilots needed to operate them.

May pharma exports climb 10.5% to $2.3 bn

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

India's pharmaceutical exports rose 10.5% year-on-year to $2,301.88 million last month.

"It is moving in a positive way and we are optimistic of sustaining growth of not less than 10%," Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India DG Ravi Uday Bhaskar said on the Centre's quick estimates released last week.

For the first two months of FY25, the exports rose 8.85% to $4,730.66 million.

On the fallout of geo-political crises, he said there were no disturbances in U.S., Europe and Africa markets that could have a bearing. The Russia-Ukraine war did make a little dent in the shipments, but the impact of Russia's emphasis on localisation was bound to impact more.

Govt. said to mull personal tax rate cuts

Reuters
NEW DELHI

The Indian government is considering lowering personal tax rates for certain categories of individuals, which could help boost consumption, two government sources told Reuters.

The plan could be announced in July, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government presents the first budget after his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) failed to win a majority on its own.

A post-poll survey showed that voters were worried about inflation, unemployment and decreasing incomes. While India's economy grew 8.2% in 2023-24, consumption has grown at half that pace.

Middle-class savings

Mr. Modi had said his administration would focus on raising middle-class savings and improving the quality of their lives.

The category of individuals that may see some tax relief are those earning more than ₹15 lakh annually, up to a certain amount which is yet to be determined, a source said.

Infosys 'incentivises' staff for Hubballi shift

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Infosys has introduced a relocation policy to incentivise employees willing to take a transfer to its Development Centre in Hubballi in Karnataka.

The IT firm, in an email, told employees Hubballi had a huge potential for growth and the small city was waiting for the right talent, like them, to build its future. "It's your turn to grow global and consider pursuing career at Hubballi DC," the company said.

Employees at band 2 and above, handling project delivery, can explore relocation. Employees at band 3 and below will get ₹25,000 at the time of relocation and ₹25,000 every six-months for two years. Employees at these levels will get ₹ 1.25 lakh in two years, while others will get ₹2.50 lakh (level 4), ₹5 lakh (level 5), ₹6 lakh (level 6) and ₹8 lakh (level 7) at the end of 24 months.

An email sent to the firm for official comment did not elicit any response.

CUB starts digital lending for MSMEs

N. Anand
CHENNAI

N. Kamakodi

The 120-year-old City Union Bank Ltd. (CUB) has switched gears and initiated several steps such as the introduction of digital-lending processes for MSMEs, adding new verticals and hiring experts to keep pace with its peers, said a top executive.

"Our policy so far has been to focus only on creation of business assets. So, we had to make some fundamental changes," said MD & CEO N. Kamakodi during an interaction.

To start with, CUB has implemented digital initiatives such as instant loans for MSMEs and retail secured (housing and affordable home loans, loans against property and auto loans). Loans of ₹5 crore-₹7.50 crore are given to MSMEs within 24-48 hours of turnaround time.

"With new initiatives and strengthened top and senior-level management, we can see visibility on growth going forward."

SBI expects 14-15% credit growth in FY25: Khara

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Given the current economic growth rate, SBI is expecting 14-15% loan growth during the fiscal year 2024-25, the bank's Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said.

"Normally the way we look at it is the GDP growth rate plus inflation and 2-3% over that. That gives us the number around 14% or so," Mr. Khara told PTI.

"Hence, 14-15% credit growth depends upon the opportunities available for lending, and it meets our risk appetite. We will be happy to grow at this pace," he said.

As far as deposits are concerned, he said, it grew by 11% last year.

Dassault Systemes eyes India revenue of $1 billion by 2027

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Pascal Daloz

Dassault Systèmes, the technology arm of Paris-based Dassault Group, on Monday said it was expecting a revenue of $1 billion from India by 2027.

Responding to a query on the company's focus on India, Dassault Systemes CEO Pascal Daloz said, "India is a fast-growing market for virtual twins and in the virtual world, we can simulate and evaluate the impact of our actions before making them real."

He also said the company had set a revenue target of $1 billion from the Indian market by 2027. Dassault Systemes globally posted a revenue of close to €7 billion in 2023.

Dassault Systemes offers virtual twin technology for a wide range of industries, including airplane manufacturing, drug, clinical trial and medical devices and healthcare, automotive/EV manufacturing, education and consumer goods. Virtual twin enables multiple iterations of a product, solution or platform to perfect it without requiring to spend much money, human labour and time.

A study jointly released by Dassault Systemes and Nasscom among 130 mid-sized (with annual recurring revenue of $500 million and above) enterprises across India as well as across Europe and APAC found there was a twofold rise in virtual twin implementation post-pandemic.

Virtual twin adoption

Presenting the highlights of the report, Sangeeta Gupta, Senior VP and Chief Strategy Officer, Nasscom said virtual-twin adoption in India could be crucial in accelerating the design-to-realisation process, helping organisations achieve sustainability and circularity goals across value chain.

Some 63% of the Indian companies deployed virtual twins at the product or the process level.

THE HINDU GROUP
CHAMPION A CHANGEMAKER TODAY. INSPIRE ANOTHER TO CHANGE TOMORROW.
Celebrating a Changemaker is not just about acknowledging the champions of change. It is also about setting an example for the future generation. The Businessline Changemaker Awards are here again to celebrate the ones who went out of their way to make this world a better place. If you know one such person, get them the recognition they deserve by nominating them for the following categories.
· Digital Transformation
· Social Transformation
· Financial Transformation
· Young Changemaker
· Changemaker of the Year
Scan the QR code or visit
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to champion a 2024 Changemaker.
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CHANGE MAKER awards
RECOGNISING HUMAN CATALYSTS
Knowledge Partners
Validation Partner
Deloitte.
niti consulting

OSLO

Palestinian Authority at risk of collapse this summer, says Norway

AFP

The Palestinian Authority could collapse in the coming months, Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said on Monday, citing a lack of funding, continuing violence, and the fact that half-a-million Palestinians are not allowed to work in Israel. "The situation is extremely dire," Mr. Barth Eide said. REUTERS

CANBERRA

China Premier Li in Australia, says relations are back 'on right track'

AFP

China hailed mended ties with Australia on Monday, saying relations were "on the right track" as the trading partners moved on from a bitter economic dispute. Chinese Premier Li Qiang arrived to a grand ceremonial welcome at Parliament House in Canberra, before talks with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. AFP

WELLINGTON

Plane lands safely in New Zealand after fire shuts down an engine

AFP

A passenger plane landed safely at a New Zealand airport on Monday after a fire shut down one of its engines, the nation's fire service said. The Virgin Australia Boeing 737-800 jet bound for Melbourne with 67 passengers and six crew members on board landed in the New Zealand city after the fire forced a diversion. AP

BEIJING

G-7 statement 'full of arrogance, prejudice, and lies', says China

GETTY IMAGES

China hit back on Monday after G-7 leaders warned Beijing to stop sending weapons components to Russia, saying their end-of-summit statement was "full of arrogance, prejudice and lies". When G-7 leaders met last week in Italy, discussions on souring trade relations with China and tensions over South China Sea were on focus. AFP

Netanyahu dissolves War Cabinet after Gantz's exit

Benny Gantz left the govt. over disagreements with the way the war was being conducted; going forward, PM would hold smaller forums with Ministers to take sensitive decisions about the war

Associated Press
TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and former Cabinet Minister Benny Gantz . FILE PHOTO

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dissolved the influential war Cabinet tasked with steering the war in Gaza, Israeli officials said on Monday, a move that comes days after a key member of the body bolted the government over frustrations surrounding the Israeli leader's handling of the war.

The move was widely expected following the departure of Benny Gantz, a centrist former military chief, earlier this month. Mr. Gantz's absence from the government makes Mr. Netanyahu more dependent on his ultranationalist allies to govern and the dissolution of the War Cabinet underlines that shift as the eight-month-long war in Gaza drags on.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that going forward Mr. Netanyahu would hold smaller forums with some of his government members for sensitive issues surrounding the war. That includes his security Cabinet, where far-right partners who oppose cease-fire deals and have voiced support for reoccupying Gaza, are members.

The war Cabinet was formed in the early days of the war, when Mr. Gantz, then an opposition party leader, joined the coalition in a show of unity following the October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel. He had demanded that a small decision-making body steer the war. It was made up of three members – Mr. Gantz, Mr. Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant – and together they made important decisions throughout the course of the war.

Mr. Gantz's departure, while not posing a direct threat to Mr. Netanyahu's rule, rocked Israeli politics at a sensitive time. The popular former military chief was seen as a statesman who boosted Israel's credibility with its international partners at a time when Israel finds itself at its most isolated.

Despite Israel's 'tactical pause', hostilities in Gaza continue

Reuters
OSLO

Hostilities continue in Rafah and southern Gaza despite the Israeli military's announcement on Sunday of tactical pauses in operations to allow humanitarian aid to enter, UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said in Oslo on Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday criticised plans announced by the military to hold daily pauses in fighting along one of the main roads into the Palestinian enclave.

Mr. Lazzarini, commissioner general of UNRWA said that there had been no pause in the fighting. "There has been information that such a decision has been taken, but the political level says none of this decision has been taken," he said.

In appeal to U.K. Muslim voters, Tory candidate cites govt. actions in Kashmir

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Marco Longhi

As the U.K.'s July 4 general election approaches, a Conservative politician has appealed to Asian voters along religious lines, hoping to appeal to sentiments around contentious issues in India.

A letter posted on social media site X, purportedly written by Marco Longhi, the former MP for North Dudley, in the West Midlands region, and addressed to British Pakistani/ Kashmiri voters, warns that the rights of Kashmiris would be compromised if people voted for his Labour Party opponent. *The Hindu* reached out to Mr. Longhi to authenticate the letter.

Mr. Longhi is running again as the Conservative candidate for North Dudley. Just under half of Dudley's population identifies as Christian and 6.2% as Muslim, according to the 2021 census. Over a third said they did not have a religion, while 1.6% identified as Sikh and 0.7% as Hindu. Ninety-two percent said they were born in the U.K. Mr. Longhi had comfortably beaten the Labour candidate with approximately twice the number of votes to win the constituency in 2019

The letter claims that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election would mean "even tougher times" for Kashmiris and would impact their rights.

"I have always condemned India's continuous illegal actions in Kashmir," Mr. Longhi wrote, adding that he had been at the forefront of speaking against the (Indian) government's "atrocities towards the people of Kashmir".

"Will it be me, or Labour candidate, Sonia KUMAR?" Mr. Longhi wrote, capitalising and underlining the word 'Kumar' and pledging to raise, "even more", the issue of Kashmir in Westminster if they voted for him.

"...Marco Longhi has highlighted and underlined the name (ethnicity) of his Labour opponent 'Sonia KUMAR' in a letter specifically targeting voters of British Pakistani/ Kashmiri heritage in the constituency," said Sunder Katwala, director of British Future, a think tank that studies questions around race, migration and identity.

Mr. Katwala authored 'Culture Clash', a joint report with Labour MPs in 2023 on how Labour and the centre-left can approach identity issues and reduce polarisation.

'Anti-Modi message'

Mr. Katwala posted an image of a Labour leaflet for a 2021 by-election showing former U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson shaking hands with Mr. Modi with the message "The risk of voting for anyone but Labour is clear."

"This new Longhi letter has a similar anti-Modi message, but combines it with a directly prejudiced challenge to a rival candidate," Mr. Katwala said.

However, the messaging has worked in the opposite direction as well. For instance, there were reports of WhatsApp messages being circulated around the 2019 U.K. election warning Hindus not to vote for the Labour party as it was "anti-India" and "anti- Modi".

'Shameful attempt'

"This is a shameful attempt to divide communities and is offensive to both Muslim and Hindu communities. There should be zero tolerance of the dog-whistle politics Mr. Longhi is engaged in," Rajesh Agrawal, Indian-born Labour parliamentary candidate for the Leicester East constituency said in a statement about the letter.

Mr. Agrawal appealed to U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to withdraw the Conservative Party's support for Mr. Longhi and to "put country before party".

Polarisation along religious lines in British Indian communities has been on the rise in recent years. Leicester was home to clashes between Hindus and Muslims in September 2022.

In 2019, the Overseas Friends of the BJP group had told *The Times of India* that it was actively campaigning on behalf of the Conservatives in 48 seats.

Philippines responsible for ship collision, says China

Associated Press
TAIPEI

Philippine Navy ship is seen at Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea. FILE PHOTO

A Chinese vessel and a Philippine supply ship collided near the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea on Monday, China's Coast Guard said, in the latest flare-up of escalating territorial disputes that have sparked alarm.

The Coast Guard said a Philippine supply ship entered waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef in the Spratly Islands, part of a territory claimed by several nations.

The Philippines says the shoal falls within its internationally recognised exclusive economic zone and often cites a 2016 international arbitration ruling invalidating China's expansive South China Sea claims based on historical grounds.

The Chinese coast guard said the Philippine craft "ignored China's repeated solemn warnings... and dangerously approached a Chinese vessel."

Meanwhile, the Philippine military called the Chinese Coast Guard's report "deceptive and misleading".

Taliban chief calls for unity among Afghans

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

The Taliban's reclusive supreme leader on Monday warned Afghans against earning money or gaining worldly honour at a time when the country is in the grip of humanitarian crises and isolated on the global stage.

Hibatullah Akhundzada gave his warning in a sermon to mark the festival of Id-ul-Azha at a mosque in southern Kandahar province, weeks before a Taliban delegation goes to Doha, Qatar, for UN-hosted talks on Afghanistan.

This is the first round of talks the Taliban will attend since they seized power in August 2021.

UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said the invitation to the Doha meeting at the end of June does not imply recognition of the Taliban.

Mr. Akhundzada reminded Afghans of their duties as Muslims and made calls for unity in his 23-minute sermon.

Sport

AIFF sacks head coach Stimac

FOOTBALL

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Influential: Stimac guided India to four major trophies. AFP

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Monday sacked Igor Stimac as the head coach of the country's senior's men's team following a disappointing campaign in the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. Stimac, who was appointed as the head coach in 2019, was given an extension last year.

India could not make the third round of the World Cup qualifier following a 1-2 defeat against Qatar in its final second round match.

"Noting the disappointing outcome of the senior men's National team's FIFA World Cup 2026 qualification campaign, the members unanimously agreed that a new Head Coach would be best placed to take the team forward," the AIFF said in a statement. "A notice of termination has been issued to Mr. Stimac by the AIFF Secretariat, and he stands relieved of his obligations with immediate effect."

The 56-year-old Stimac, who was part of the Croatia team that made the semifinals of the 1998 World Cup, had taken charge of the Blue Tigers in 2019, after the departure of Stephen Constantine.

Under Stimac, India won four major trophies, including two SAFF Championships, one Intercontinental Cup and a Tri-Nations Series.

DeChambeau outlasts McIlroy to regain the crown

US OPEN GOLF

Reuters
PINEHURST

Mission accomplished: DeChambeau held his nerve to pocket his second Major. GETTY IMAGES

Bryson DeChambeau needed some good fortune in the U.S. Open, but that didn't tamp down the celebration of his second Major championship.

DeChambeau parred the final three holes to complete a 1-over-par 71 and that was enough for a one-shot victory Sunday as he captured the U.S. Open for the second time in five years.

"Just thankful," the 30-year-old DeChambeau said. "Thankful that I was a part of it."

DeChambeau, who began the day with a three-shot lead, finished at 6-under 274, benefitting from Rory McIlroy's late putting failures.

McIlroy, who gained the lead on the back side, bogeyed the last hole by missing a par putt from about 4 feet. Then DeChambeau, playing in the last group, clinched it with a par putt after blasting out of a greenside bunker on his third shot.

That was quite a recovery following a wayward tee shot that put him in a bind.

"I was a little lucky," DeChambeau said. "Rory didn't make a couple putts that he could have coming in. I had an amazing up-and-down on the last."

DeChambeau let out a huge scream amid an animated reaction after the ball dropped into the cup on the final putt.

Badly needed

"I really wanted this one," said the LIV Golf member who was runner-up to Xander Schauffele at last month's PGA Championship.

McIlroy's 69 was tainted by bogeys on three of the last four holes, and he finished as the U.S. Open runner-up for the second year in a row. McIlroy, who won the 2011 U.S. Open, was trying to secure his fifth Major championship and his first since 2014.

Tony Finau (67) and Patrick Cantlay (70) tied for third place at 4 under, France's Matthieu Pavon (71) claimed fifth at 3 under and Japan's Hideki Matsuyama (70) was sixth at 2 under.

Pavon, who played with DeChambeau in Sunday's final pairing, had his best finish in a Major.

Only eight golfers finished under par for the week. World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler never got untracked, shooting 72 in the final round and tying for 41st place.

Top scores: 274: Bryson DeChambeau 67-69-67-71.
275: Rory McIlroy 65-72-69-69.
276: Tony Finau 68-69-72-67, Patrick Cantlay 65-71-70-70.
277: Matthieu Pavon 67-70-69-71.
278: Hideki Matsuyama 72-66-70-70.

A BG-BGE

BLITZKRIEG

Estonia's Sahil Chauhan smashes quickest T20I century

INSTAGRAM@ECACRICKET

Estonia's Sahil Chauhan (144 n.o., 41b, 6x4, 18x6) on Monday hit a century off just 27 deliveries against Cyprus to break the record for the fastest ton in T20Is. It bettered Namibia's Jan-Nicole Loftie-Eaton 33-ball effort against Nepal earlier this year. Sahil also broke the record for the most maximums in a T20I innings.

HEAVY CRITICISM

Coach Kirsten slams Pakistan team's lack of unity: reports

K.R. DEEPAK

Pakistan head coach Gary Kirsten said there was "no unity" in the side. "They call it a team, but it isn't a team. They aren't supporting each other; everyone is separated. I've worked with many teams, but I've never seen such a situation," Kirsten said according to reports.

INCONSISTENT

We were good only in patches: Netherlands skipper Edwards

GETTY IMAGES

Netherlands captain Scott Edwards said his team delivered only patches of good cricket in its T20 World Cup campaign. "We had good patches throughout the tournament. You just cannot afford that against good-quality sides. You are out here to win the game," Edwards said after his side's loss to Sri Lanka.

4-4-0-3

Ferguson's all-maiden spell highlight of NZ's win over PNG

GETTY IMAGES

New Zealand's Lockie Ferguson delivered four maidens and claimed three wickets in his side's thumping win over Papua New Guinea. **The scores:** PNG 78 in 19.4 overs (Boult 2/14, Southee 2/11, Ferguson 3/0, Sodhi 2/29) lost to NZ 79/3 in 12.2 overs (Conway 35, Morea 2/4); **Toss:** NZ; **PoM:** Ferguson.

Pant — a breath of fresh air for India

For the left-hander, there are only reactions to each delivery and no predetermined classical triggers while batting; the smooth sideways movement and the athletic pouching with the big gloves is the reward for the strenuous rehabilitation he had to undertake after the horrific accident

T20 WORLD CUP

Ashwin Achal
LAUDERHILL

Even at nets, there is a marked difference between how Rishabh Pant goes about his business when compared to other batters in the Indian team.

The slow, low pitches in New York – both at the match and practice venues – makes timing difficult. Virat Kohli does all the right things with technique, backlift, and feet movement, but in following traditional methods, is unable to adapt to this new challenge.

Pant, often batting next to Kohli in the adjacent net, is doing the opposite. There are only reactions to each delivery; there are no predetermined classical triggers. Pant uses the wrist to send a length ball to fine-leg. A short ball outside off is crunched flat-batted through cover. All by standing still with minimal feet movement. When it is time to get adventurous, there is full commitment. A full walk outside off, crouched low, body twisted to paddle a leg-stump inswinger over the wicketkeeper. Watch the ball, react, repeat.

It is this simplistic approach that has made Pant the top run-scorer among

Masterstroke: India has maximised Pant's attacking abilities by promoting him to No. 3. K.R DEEPAK

Indian batters in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup group stage which concluded in the USA. If Pant had gotten the chance to go up against Canada here on Saturday, his preparedness for the Super 8 stage would have been complete.

The team management's decision to move him up to three and maximise his attacking abilities has paid rich rewards. The southpaw was at his best in the game against Pakistan, making a match-winning 31-ball 42. After a shaky start, Pant came into his own in the 10th over bowled by pacer Haris Rauf. The crowd went berserk went Pant tumbled over as he lapped Rauf to the fine-leg fence. The next ball needed only a slight turn of the wrists get another four to fine-leg.

Pant's comeback to international cricket from a serious road accident is a remarkable feat. His batting abilities have remained at a high level, and his wicketkeeping has improved. The smooth sideways movement and athletic pouching with the big gloves is the reward for the strenuous rehabilitation he had to undertake.

Former India coach Ravi Shastri summed up Pant's inspirational return in a moving dressing room speech.

"I had tears in my eyes when I read about his accident, and when I saw him in hospital, it was even worse. Batting - everybody knew what you were capable of. But your wicketkeeping - the range of movement that you have got so quickly after the operation is a tribute to your hard work. It's an inspiration to millions that from adversity, from jaws of death, you can snatch a win," Shastri said in the *bcci.tv* video.

India now needs Pant to carry his form into the Super 8 stage in the West Indies. The 26-year-old is the X- factor who carries the team's hopes in this tournament.

The standings

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
GROUP-A						
India (Q)	4	3	0	1	7	1.137
USA (Q)	4	2	1	1	5	0.127
Pakistan	4	2	2	0	4	0.294
Canada	4	1	2	1	3	-0.493
Ireland	4	0	3	1	1	-1.293
GROUP-B						
Australia (Q)	4	4	0	0	8	2.791
England (Q)	4	2	1	1	5	3.611
Scotland	4	2	1	1	5	1.255
Namibia	4	1	3	0	2	-2.585
Oman	4	0	4	0	0	-3.062
GROUP-C						
Afghanistan (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	4.230
West Indies (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	2.596
New Zealand	4	2	2	0	4	0.415
Uganda	4	1	3	0	2	-4.510
Papua New Guinea	4	0	4	0	0	-1.268
GROUP-D						
South Africa (Q)	4	4	0	0	8	0.470
Bangladesh (Q)	4	3	1	0	6	0.616
Sri Lanka	4	1	2	1	3	0.863
Netherlands	4	1	3	0	2	-1.358
Nepal	4	0	3	1	1	-0.542

Q: Qualified

Today's match

St. Lucia, 6 a.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD T20Is

Played: 7

West Indies 4 | Afghanistan 3

Fiery Tanzim helps Bangladesh progress

Agence France-Presse
ARNOS VALE

Bangladesh qualified for the Super 8 of the T20 World Cup after a 21-run victory over Nepal on Sunday.

Bangladesh was dismissed for 106 in 19.3 overs, but a devastating spell of four for seven from pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib helped the side bowl out Nepal for 85.

The scores: Bangladesh 106 in 19.3 overs (Sompal 2/10, Airee 2/22, Paudel 2/20, Lamichhane 2/17) bt Nepal 85 in 19.2 overs (Malla 27, Airee 25, Tanzim 4/7, Mustafizur 3/7); **Toss:** Nepal; **PoM:** Tanzim.

Tanzim. GETTY IMAGES

At St Lucia: Sri Lanka 201/6 in 20 overs (Kusal Mendis 46, Asalanka 46, de Silva 34, Mathews 30; van Beek 2/45) bt Netherlands 118 in 16.4 overs (Levitt 31, Edwards 31; Thushara 3/24, Hasaranga 2/25, Pathirana 2/12); **Toss**: Netherlands; **PoM**: Asalanka.

Super Eight

GROUP 1
- AFGHANISTAN
- AUSTRALIA
- BANGLADESH
- INDIA

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP WEST INDIES & USA 2024

GROUP 2
- ENGLAND
- SOUTH AFRICA
- USA
- WEST INDIES

DATE	TEAMS	TIME	VENUE
June 19	USA vs South Africa	8 p.m.	Antigua
June 20	England vs West Indies	6 a.m.	St. Lucia
June 20	**Afghanistan vs India**	**8 p.m.**	**Barbados**
June 21	Australia vs Bangladesh	6 a.m.	Antigua
June 21	England vs South Africa	8 p.m.	St. Lucia
June 22	USA vs West Indies	6 a.m.	Barbados
June 22	**India vs Bangladesh**	**8 p.m.**	**Antigua**
June 23	Afghanistan vs Australia	6 a.m.	St. Vincent
June 23	USA vs England	8 p.m.	Barbados
June 24	West Indies vs South Africa	6 a.m.	Antigua
June 24	**Australia vs India**	**8 p.m.**	**St. Lucia**
June 25	Afghanistan vs Bangladesh	6 a.m.	St. Vincent

■ **The top two from each group will progress to the semifinals**

** All times IST*

Slovakia stuns Belgium as VAR denies Lukaku twice

Hit men: Schranz beats Casteel for Slovakia's winner. *Right:* Bellingham celebrates his strike. REUTERS, AFP

Reuters
FRANKFURT

Ivan Schranz scored Slovakia's quickest goal at a major tournament to take his side to a gritty upset 1-0 victory over wasteful Belgium in European Championship Group E on Monday.

It was Belgium's first loss in 16 games under coach Domenico Tedesco and a flashback to a disastrous 2022 World Cup campaign, although it did have two goals ruled out by VAR.

Unfortunate

Both were from the boot of Romelu Lukaku, the first for offside and the second a handball in the build-up on a hugely frustrating day for the burly striker in which he also missed several clear-cut chances.

Tedesco's side dominated the 90 minutes, but lacked a clinical touch and when they did find it they were denied by the VAR and scrambling Slovakia defence.

Slovakia joined Romania at the top of the standings after their 3-0 win over Ukraine in Munich earlier on Monday. Belgium next meets Romania in Cologne on Saturday.

Long time coming

Earlier, Romania won its first Euro match in 24 years. Stunning long-range strikes in each half, one from captain Nicolae Stanciu and the other from midfielder Razvan Marin, shocked Serhiy Rebrov's Ukraine, which had dominated the opening 20 minutes.

The result was all but confirmed shortly before the hour mark when influential forward Dennis Man drove into the box from a corner and put the ball across goal for Denis Dragus to tap in.

It was Romania's second win across 17 matches at the European Championships, the first being a 3-2 victory over England in 2000.

Meanwhile on Sunday, an early header by Jude Bellingham was enough for England to beat Serbia 1-0 in its Group C opener.

Early lead

England took the lead in the 13th minute when Bellingham burst into the six-yard box to power home a header from a deflected Bukayo Saka cross, finishing off a move that the 20-year-old maestro launched himself deep in midfield.

Gareth Southgate's side controlled possession but struggled to turn its domination into scoring opportunities against a Serbian side which defended deep and ended the first half with no goal attempts at the Arena AufSchalke.

Serbia looked livelier in the second half albeit without creating clear-cut chances and goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic had to make a stunning reflex save that bounced off the crossbar to keep out a Harry Kane close-range header in the 77th minute.

The results:
Group E: Belgium 0 lost to Slovakia 1 (Schranz 7).
Romania 3 (Stanciu 29, Marin 53, Dragus 57) bt Ukraine 0.
Group C: Serbia 0 lost to England 1 (Bellingham 13).

Ronaldo's Portugal set to play Czechia in Group F opener

Associated Press
LEIPZIG

Cristiano Ronaldo can become the first player to feature at six European Championships when Portugal opens its Euro 2024 campaign against the Czech Republic. But Ronaldo is not the only danger for the Czechs, who are making their eight successive European appearance.

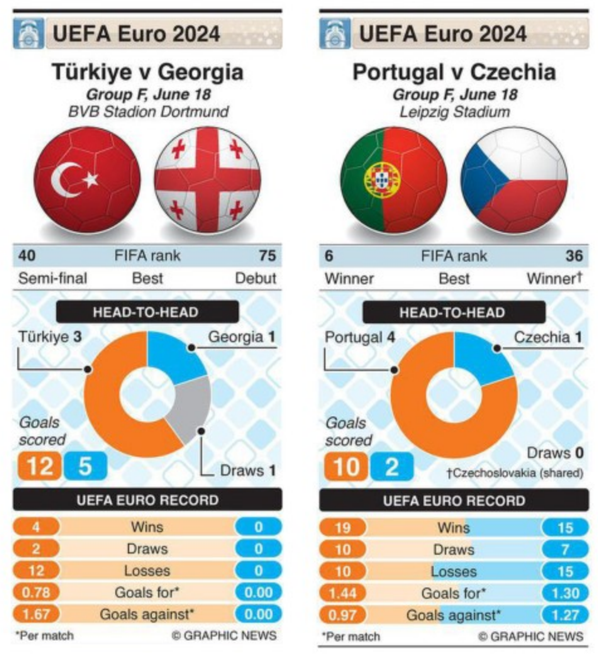
This will be the fourth meeting between the countries at the tournament. Portugal has won the last four meetings between the teams, without conceding in the last three.

Portugal coach Roberto Martínez and his men eased through qualifying for Euro 2024 as the only team to win every game. Martínez' side scored 36 goals and conceded only two as it qualified with three matches to spare.

Even without Ronaldo, Portugal boasts a formidable attacking lineup with Barcelona's João Félix, Paris Saint-Germain's Gonçalo Ramos and Milan's Rafael Leão all providing options for Bruno Fernandes in midfield.

The 39-year-old forward, however, showed he's not finished yet by scoring two goals as Portugal warmed up with a 3-0 win over Ireland. Ronaldo bagged five goals at Euro 2020, the same as Czech striker Patrik Schick to share the top-scorer award.

Schick arrives at the tournament full of confidence after helping Bayer Leverkusen win the Bundesliga.



"Ronaldo always thinks in big proportions, and we want to support him because he is our captain. He's the one who has won the most among us," said compatriot Diogo Dalot.

Czech coach Ivan Hasek believes that his team has the highest ambitions and that's clear to see. "We could be knocked out in the group stage, or we could win it. These are the two possible options."

INBRIEF

Sumit Nagal attains a career-high ATP ranking of 71

India's Sumit Nagal, who finished runner-up to Luciano Darderi at the Perugia ATP Challenger on Sunday, continued his ascent in the ATP singles chart, climbing to a career-high ranking of 71 on Monday. The 26-year-old, who will be the sole Indian in the men's singles at the Paris Olympics, has so far logged 777 ATP points. A string of impressive results in recent times has not only helped Nagal improve his ranking but also make the cut for singles at the Paris Games.

Ankita in pre-quarterfinals of Gaiba WTA event

Lucky-loser Ankita Raina beat Dominika Salkova of Czech Republic 7-5, 6-3 in the first round of the €100,000 WTA tennis tournament in Gaiba, Italy, on Monday. Seeded fourth, Ankita had earlier been beaten 6-4, 6-0 by Susan Bandecchi of Switzerland in the first and final qualifying round.

Sprint hurdler Kiran breaks under-18 National record

Kerala's K. Kiran broke Maymon Poulose's 10-year-old boys' under-18 110m hurdles National record as he won gold at the 19th National youth athletics in Bilaspur on Monday. The 17-year-old clocked 13.52s (old: 13.57s). Delhi's Neeru Pathak bettered Rezoana Mallick Heena's 200m meet record clocking 23.94s (old: 24.23). Also breaking meet records were Odisha Pratik Maharana in the boys 200m (21.65s, old: 21.87) and Haryana Anshu in the girls shot put (16.14m, old: 15.59m).

LIVE TELECAST

Football: Euro 2024, Sony Sports Ten 2, 3, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 9.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday).

Smriti and Asha sparkle at 'home'

The two felt Bengaluru crowd's support as it chanted 'RCB, RCB...'; the opener and leggie's performances gave local fans a lot to cheer

CRICKET

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Reason to smile: Asha and Smriti were the architects of India's win in the first ODI against South Africa on Sunday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Royal Challengers Bangalore fans seldom miss an opportunity to chant their franchise's name in stadia. At times, it has come across as jarring, for echoes of "RCB, RCB..." could even be heard in the totally unrelated universe of Indian Super League football.

On Sunday at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, a section of supporters burst into the same chorus, during India women's thumping 143-run ODI victory over South Africa, but for once it didn't feel totally out of place.

They were for Smriti Mandhana, who scored her sixth ODI century, and, to a lesser degree, leggie Asha Sobhana, who claimed a four-wicket haul on debut. Smriti captained RCB to the Women's Premier League trophy in March and Asha was the second-highest wicket-taker (12) in that victorious campaign.

"Post WPL, it feels like I'm more from Bangalore than Maharashtra," Smriti said after the match, with a wide grin. "I really like the crowd support here."

The adulation wasn't without reason. Smriti's 117-run knock against the Proteas stood out for its studiousness. Prior to this, she had crossed the half-century mark 31 times in ODIs but reached hundred on just five occasions. But on a not-so-easy pitch, she put her head down, overcame mid-innings cramps and bailed her team out of trouble from a precarious 99 for five.

"I started off pretty well, and whenever you get two cover drives in the first over you always feel good," the 27-year-old said. "[But] whenever I thought of taking the game on, there was a wicket. Maybe that helped me stay at the crease.

"My target was to take the team over 250. I started off in the 90s [strike-rate] but had to cut down my shots midway. There were a few dot balls but I still had to be calm about it," the southpaw added.

For Asha, 33, it was the high point of a dream year so far. After playing a starring role in RCB's WPL triumph, Asha earned a maiden National team call ahead of the five-match T20I tour of Bangladesh in May. She played two matches there and the ODI debut followed soon.

"Back in 2017 or 2018, I remember looking at her in the Challengers, and thinking 'Oh she can really turn the ball'," Smriti said about Asha. "Her last eight months have shown what hard work can do to a player. The way she bowled [versus South Africa], turning the ball square, I am happy that she is in my team. Whenever I face her in the nets, it's really hard to go over the top. I love (batting against) leg-spinners, but I can't really do it against Asha. That shows her strength."

Ganemat places sixth in women's skeet

Sports Bureau

Ganemat Sekhon shot 120 out of 125 to make the women's skeet final of the shotgun World Cup in Lonato, Italy, but ended up sixth eventually.

Olympic quota winners Maheshwari Chauhan (114) and Raiza Dhillon (111) placed 30th and 41st in a field of 56 shooters.

In men's skeet, Sheeraz Sheikh and Olympic quota winner Anantjeet Singh Naruka shot identical score of 120, and missed the final by three points in a highly competitive field of 121 shooters.

Mairaj Ahmad Khan placed 94th.

The results: Skeet: Men: 1. Jesper Hansen (Den) 54 (124); 2. Conner Lynn Prince (USA) 53 (123); 3. Rashid Al-Athba (Qat) 44 (123); 36. Sheeraz Sheikh 120; 37. Anantjeet Singh Naruka 120; 94. Mairaj Ahmad Khan 113. RPO: Kuldeep Singh 113; Arjun Thakur 111.
Women: 1. Dania Vizzi (USA) 57 (121); 2. Diana Bacosi (Ita) 56 (120); 3. Austen Smith (USA) 45 (121); 6. Ganemat Sekhon 16 (120); 30. Maheshwari Chauhan 114; 41. Raiza Dhillon 111.

Neeraj all set for Paavo Nurmi Games

Raring to go: Neeraj will be the lone Indian in the field. FILE PHOTO

ATHLETICS

Press Trust of India
TURKU (FINLAND)

Forced into a short break to mend a niggle, Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will return to competitive action at the Paavo Nurmi Games here on Tuesday against a stellar field, hoping to continue his build-up to the Paris Games with renewed vigour.

Stellar line-up

The 26-year-old superstar, the lone Indian in the field here, will be up against German teenage sensation Max Dehning, who is the youngest member of the coveted 90m club, which Neeraj is aspiring to enter.

The 19-year-old is being seen as a major competition for Neeraj when he defends his Tokyo Games gold medal in Paris.

Local favourite Oliver Helander, who had defeated the Indian in the 2022 edition of the one-day competition, will also be in action. Two-time World champion Anderson Peters of Grenada and 2012 Olympic champion Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago are in fray as well.

The Indian won a silver in 2022 with a throw of 89.30m, which was his personal best at that time. Neeraj improved to 89.94m at the Stockholm leg of the Diamond League in the same year.

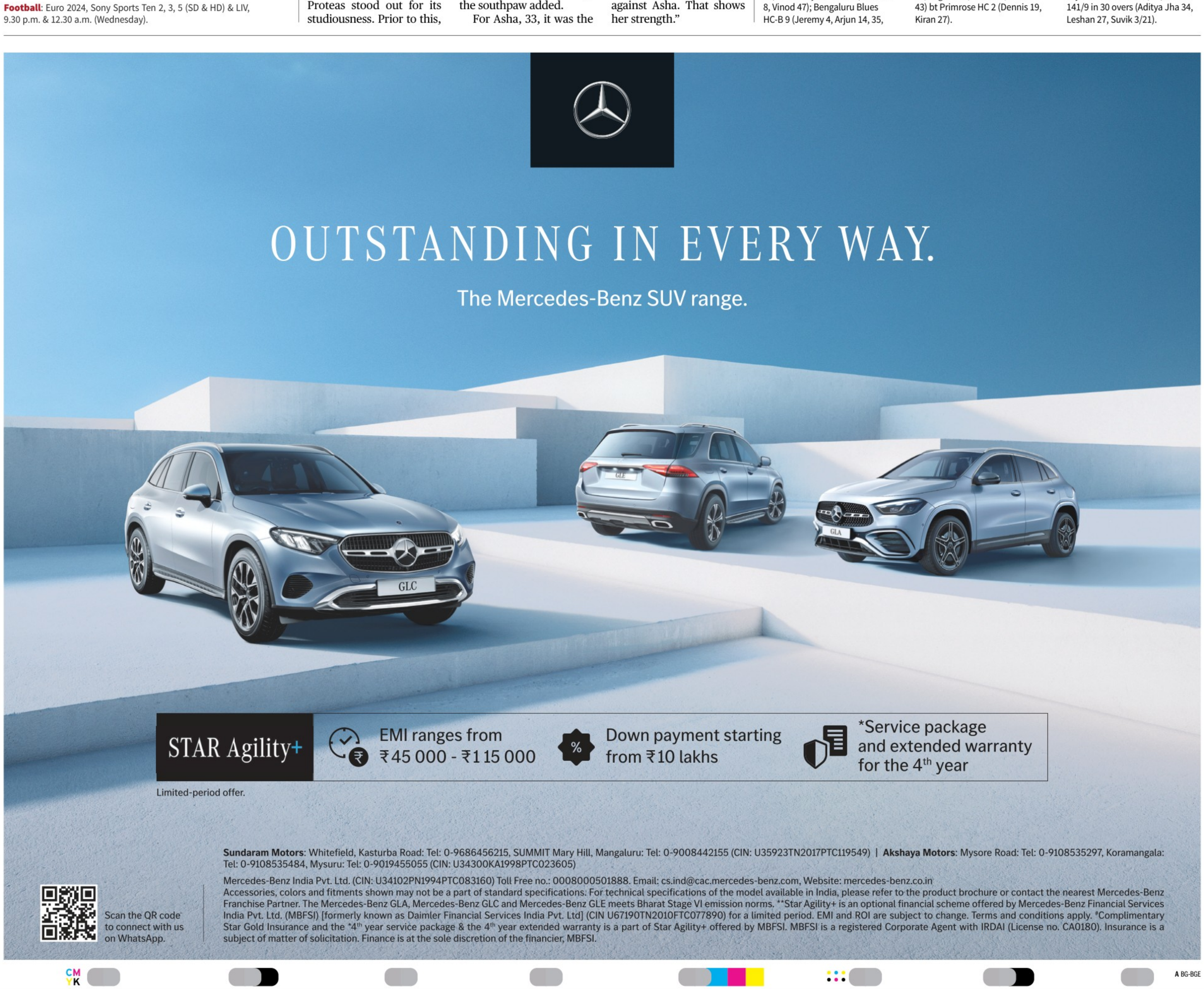
BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Nikhil on the rampage for South Alpha SA

Nikhil scored a hat-trick as South Alpha Sports Academy thrashed IISC Gymkhana 8-2 in the Travancore Cup hockey tournament on Monday.
The results: South Alpha Sports Academy 8 (Hemanth 13, Levin 21, Nikhil 25, 28, 34, 36, Sagnik 4, 37) bt IISC Gymkhana 2 (Guneeth 8, Vinod 47); Bengaluru Blues HC-B 9 (Jeremy 4, Arjun 14, 35, Surah 15, Gopi 17, Bopanna 21, Manoj 24, Santosh 26, Manish 29) bt Leo's SC 0.
On Sunday: Germanite HA 3 (Sumit Kethan 9, 48, Arun 42) bt New Ashoka HC 1 (P. Mahendran 37).
Naveen HC 5 (Parasu 10, Ajith 33, Miteesh 38, C.N. Naveen Kumar 42, Manoj 48 bt Ideal Sports Academy 0.
Gameon HC 6 (Pranav 4, Sujith 9, 47, Yogesh 12, Shrin 32, Lokesh 43) bt Primrose HC 2 (Dennis 19, Kiran 27).

Atharv on song as PVV clinches title

Atharv Deshpande top-scored with 89 as PVV defeated JHS by 49 runs in the final to win the under-16 title in the Save Water Cup cricket tournament.
The scores: PVV 190 for seven in 30 overs (Atharv Deshpande 89, Aryan Sinh Chavda 3/37) bt JHS 141/9 in 30 overs (Aditya Jha 34, Leshan 27, Suvik 3/21).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